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IN SILK**
by
**GEORGES
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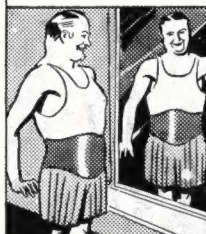
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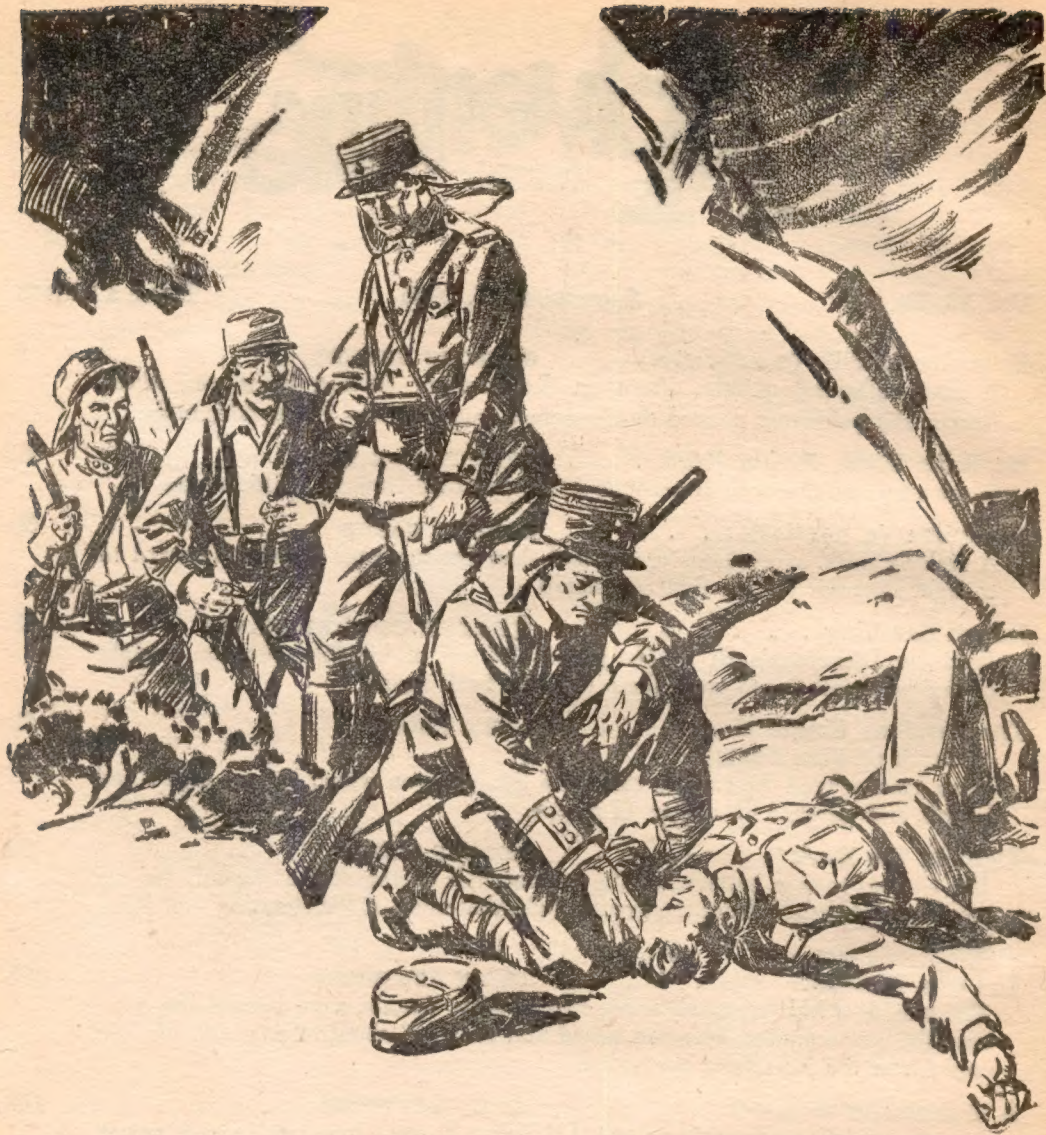
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KNUCKLES

A Novelette

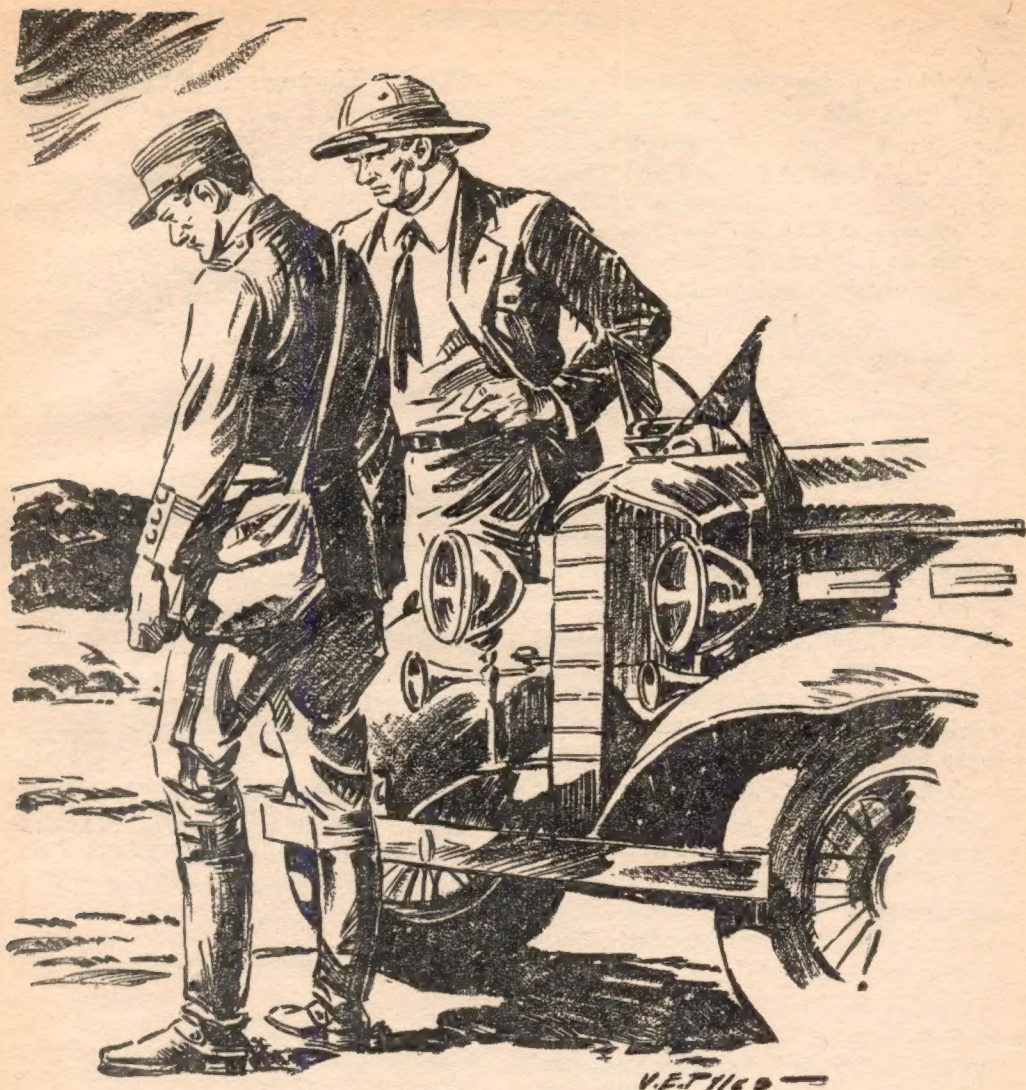
CHAPTER I

DEATH FROM THE HILLS

THE last armored car with its jutting machine-gun rolled by like a big metal beetle, on the trail of the loaded trucks for the further posts of the Middle Atlas. The sound of the

motors throbbed awhile, dwindled away in the distance; all was quiet. Heat dripped down from the burnished sky, stirred by wandering gusts of cool wind. Calm reigned; the peace of Allah seemed settled upon Morocco.

If Lieutenant Dubosq, who had the keenest instinct for trouble and excitement in the whole Legion, had not in-



IN SILK

By Georges Surdez

sisted upon escorting him, Granel would have been certain his task was over for the afternoon. But as Dubosq was there, he waited a few minutes longer than usual.

"All right, pick them up," Lieutenant Granel said, at last.

He indicated the automatic rifles placed in convenient positions along the

rocky crest occupied by his section of the Foreign Legion. The men, many of them in their shirt-sleeves, not a few wearing fatigue bonnets or rag turbans instead of the regulation képi, gathered the weapons and ammunition leisurely.

They came to this spot often, on "protection service," when cars and supply-convoys were known to be on the move.

They knew every boulder and every bush. They did not dislike the chore, which gave them an opportunity to stretch their legs and supplied a break in the monotonous existence of Post Bou Ghentour without entailing much physical labor.

Presumably, their presence on the crest prevented attack. As a matter of fact, the armored cars would have been sufficient. The neighboring tribesmen, as yet not convinced that the French were masters in the land, had learned nevertheless that there was small profit in exchanging bullets with chaps behind steel plates, even if one did have an occasional fair shot from above into the roofless vehicles.

Granel did not hurry his men. There was a long period of daylight remaining. He produced a cigarette case, counted the white cylinders, lighted one. He was twenty-four years old, a trim, solidly-muscled, active man. He had been in the Legion three years.

"How about passing them to me?" said Dubosq, joining him.

"Charming custom of yours," Granel remarked, handing over the case: "using me for a pack-mule."

"The fool relies on the wise," Dubosq explained.

Although Granel's junior in promotion, he was three years older. He was tall, with wide, bony shoulders. His dark, smooth face was animated by an odd expression of defiance and recklessness. His glance was a challenge. A particular neatness of dress, the way he wore his belt, revealed to the initiate that he had served as a sergeant, hence also as a private.

Dubosq was off duty, had come along, he said, for the walk, even carried a shotgun in the hope of bagging some game. Granel knew, however, that he was worried by an old superstition. The younger lieutenant was due for leave in two days, and might be expected to meet with trouble.

"Ready, Lieutenant," Sergeant Berswald reported.

"All right, let's go."

A corporal and two men trotted ahead some distance, to form a 'point.' Post Bou Ghentour was six miles distant, down the pebbly valley, up another range of hills. At certain turns of the trail, it could be distinguished plainly. Granel even imagined he could see the hulks of the bastions, the cement shaft of the watch-tower. It was a sizable establishment for the region, as nearly four hundred soldiers were stationed there, counting fifty irregular native riders quartered in the village outside the barbed-wire enclosure.

"You're a lucky guy"—Dubosq spoke suddenly—"going on leave just before the expedition starts. I'll have to wait eight months to a year now. Meknes, Fez, Casa—think of sitting on the terrace of the *Roi de la Bière*—a man's a sucker to be in this trade, I'm telling you. No wonder people who are intelligent don't come out here! For he didn't come, after all. I watched the cars—"

"Who didn't come?"

"Forestier, Senator Forestier—who else?"

"The captain told me he would not be allowed to come, as this zone is not quiet enough yet to risk important people."—Granel indicated the men in their practical but slovenly rigs—"otherwise they'd all be wearing regulation khaki. You know how much the old man would miss a chance to nurse his promotion! I suppose the authorities would think twice about exposing the precious carcass of an industrial magnate." He laughed: "If the head of the Commission for Moroccan Progress appointed by the Chambers were to be bumped off out here, it would make a stink."

Dubosq lifted his shoulders casually: "Sure. Some people die more noisily than others. If anything happens to us,

though, who cares? Two lines in the local papers."

"Don't," Granel urged; "you'll make me cry!"

"No kidding, I—" Dubosq broke off, grinned widely: "Here's Berswald, all excited! Bet you he wants permission to spit!"

Sergeant Berswald was perspiring, earnest, breathless. He came to a stop, joined his heels, saluted and declaimed in a dramatic voice: "Lieutenant, those are shots!"

"Ah? Where?"

The German non-com indicated the direction of the crest they had left some time before: "There."

"What would any one be shooting at?" Granel wondered: "the trucks have passed—"

"I'm not saying they didn't, Lieutenant. But just listen—"

The entire section had halted; no one spoke. The trampling died out. All listened tensely.

"Strange as it seems," Dubosq murmured, "he's right."



GRANEL nodded. He could feel the remote vibrations in the air. And he hesitated. His orders were limited to the occupation of the crest while the trucks passed by. Beyond that, his responsibility did not extend. He had fifty men with him and the hills appeared deserted. But he was aware that the slopes could be swarming with armed men within a few minutes. His small detachment might not be numerous enough to cope with an emergency, but it would be, on the other hand, amply sufficient to supply a casualty list, for which Lieutenant Granel would be blamed.

"Cold feet?" Dubosq whispered with a sly smile.

"Maybe. We're supposed to be back before twilight." Granel shrugged: "However, we might as well see what it's all about. About face—"

The section obeyed, and they hastened toward the firing, which was growing more distinct. There were the reports of Lebel carbines, but that did not mean much, for many of those handy weapons were held by natives. At intervals, the Legionnaires broke into a trot.

"Who have we got out?" Granel asked Dubosq.

"Nobody today. Must be a fatigue party from another post."

"What would they be doing over here?"

"Suppose you tell me," Dubosq retorted; "but the Chleuhs don't shoot at the clouds—"

When they reached the crest they had occupied earlier, the Legionnaires saw nothing but the naked slopes and the empty road below, rutted by the tires of the trucks. They progressed further. Dubosq was several paces in the lead, his aquiline nose lifted as if to scent the air. He gestured suddenly.

A number of native sharpshooters were in plain sight on another ridge—wiry legs, short brown cloaks, white turbans, glistening shaven skulls. They were sprawled on their stomachs or kneeling, firing down at something on the motor path beneath them.

They evidently believed the Legionnaires half-way back to the Post. When the first shots came from their rear, they scattered with amazing speed. They seemed to leap into the air and vanish, so prompt were they at finding new cover.

"Hope they beat it away," Granel muttered. He was due for leave and not anxious to face danger. But he was deceived; pale flashes lashed into the sunlight, bullets whined around the Legionnaires. "Come on—"

Dubosq had slung the shotgun over one shoulder, and took the heavy automatic pistol from his belt-holster. Granel saw his face tense, the eyes kindle with fierce, jubilant excitement.

His almost boyish admiration for his older friend, who was his subordinate and yet his mentor in the Corps, surged afresh. Dubosq was a fighter.

"Spread out, at the double—"

As he trotted, Granel envied Dubosq, who was elated. An odd man, Dubosq, with an unstable, capricious humor and annoying traits for ordinary existence. But when in action, he justified himself. Of course, he was a veteran Legionnaire. At twenty-seven, he was serving his tenth year in the corps.

His story was well known: Born in Northern France, Dubosq had received a good education and was preparing for a law degree. At eighteen, he had thrown books aside and enlisted in the Legion. In eighteen months he had been a corporal, in two years a sergeant. He had been commissioned at twenty-four, had remained a sub-lieutenant only two years. On parade, he could wear as many medals as many a man twice his age.

But if he had become an officer in rank and dress, he affected to have remained a ranker in his personal tastes. Moreover, he showed scorn for glory and military vanity, called his trade a racket, and loved to shock school officers by frequenting low establishments. He could fence and ride like an accomplished gentleman of the glamorous period, and he could fight with fists, feet and teeth, like a penal camp tough.

The fusillade aimed at the Legionnaires increased, as other rifles opened from flanking slopes. Granel sought to maneuver to gain sight of the trail and see what the mountaineers were attacking. He was uneasy, because he was not sure how many of the enemy he had to handle. He estimated that twenty-five to thirty guns were in use, but there might be many more.

This unexpected engagement had all the outer marks of one of the dirty minor skirmishes in which a man lost his life stupidly, obscurely. Granel remembered

Dubosq's mention of two lines in the papers with bitter clarity.

On the other hand, Dubosq, so skeptical when all was quiet, now was weighed by no such qualms. His long legs carried him ahead and he seemed to suck the swifter among the Legionnaires after him. He scrambled up the slope, plunged heedlessly into the bushes. To him, a fight was a fight, to be enjoyed to the extreme, whether it took place against a handful of marauders or against the Prussian Guard.



GRANEL saw a half-nude hillman rise before his comrade, fire an ancient pistol into his face. Dubosq was lucky as usual. Where Granel probably would have had half his face torn off by the slug of hammered lead, he was unscathed. His arm swung, he struck with the barrel of the automatic, stamped vigorously two or three times. The Legionnaires nearest him had fixed bayonets and pursued fleeing silhouettes.

All resistance had vanished suddenly. Granel sensed that all peril was over seconds before the firing actually ceased, as instinct informed him when the natives gave up. He walked to the edge of the ridge, looked down on the road, sixty or seventy yards below.

His first emotion was relief. He could offer an official reason for retracing his steps. There was a car down there, halted in the middle of the road.

In Morocco, a car ordinarily meant European passengers, people under the protection of the military. Furthermore, Granel discerned small tricolor flags flanking the hood. The car was a long, powerful vehicle, obviously too expensive to be an army machine. The officer noticed that the hood was battered, pitted by shots, literally riddled in some places. The glass of the windshield glittered on the ground.

And there was a body sprawled on the road to the right of the machine; a



soldier wearing the fatigue uniform of the Transport Corps. He was evidently dead; his outstretched hand clutched a carbine. Another man, probably the chauffeur, had sought to leave the front seat to dive for the cover of bushes beyond the ditch. One of his legs, in a leather legging, jutted out and quivered.

There were others in the back of the car. But they had huddled down, and it was impossible to ascertain how many they were, what they might be.

The whole formed a strange, startling little scene of purest tragedy, in that circle between the stony hills, with the downpour of sunlight, in the now absolute silence.

Granel started down the slope, swearing. Only an idiot, or some reckless fool unacquainted with the region, would have followed in an open car so closely behind a supply-convoy. Those with the least experience knew that the hostile

tribes always sent out raiding parties to lurk along the roads, ready to take advantage of accident, incident, trifling carelessness, to provide a chance to loot.

An agile German private gained the bottom of the incline, well in the lead. As he headed for the car, several shots rattled out. He ducked, flung himself into a shallow depression, in a single movement, as easy

and natural as the blinking of the eyes. His guttural voice lifted, with a thick, comical accent:

"Hey, no shooting, comrades! Legionnaire!"

"France, Legion," Granel shouted, cupping his hands: "You're safe—" and he gave orders, over his shoulder, for lookouts to be placed.

Dubosq was at his side, cool and smiling.

"Some marksman in there," he gave

his opinion sarcastically. "Five shots at ten yards, five misses."

"Well, it's lucky at that—" Granel said.

As he walked up to the automobile, the rear side door opened, and a lanky silhouette stepped to the road. The man lifted his hand feebly in greeting and thanks, and Granel believed him to have been wounded at first. He identified him as a staff-captain, from his stripes and thunder-bolt emblems embroidered on the collar tabs. A dapper, almost foppish chap, with a long nose, light blue eyes and a long chin.

"I'm Lieutenant Granel," the Legionnaire said. "Glad we happened along in time."

"Captain Vannoy," the other replied.

Granel averted his eyes in embarrassment. For if he had ever seen a man sickened by emotion, worse, the prey of utter terror, it was this captain. The muscular jaws quivered; the lips lifted spasmodically to bare the even teeth; he could hardly speak. His slim, white hand passed a handkerchief over his face; his whole body trembled.

Dubosq had turned over the body on the road. He took one look at the small hole near the root of the nose, eased the corpse down and went to the chauffeur's assistance. This man wore a livery instead of a uniform, was a private employee. He was alive, but grievously hurt. A bullet had torn his left side after mangling his hand. Dubosq and one of the Legionnaires gave him first aid.



GRANEL turned his attention to the car again, and saw the other passenger. He was rather tall, stout, between fifty-five and sixty. He wore a civilian suit of khaki, cut to resemble a uniform, and the rosette of the Legion of Honor was in his buttonhole. Granel recognized the clean-shaved, massive, Napoleonic face from newspaper photo-

graphs: Senator Forestier, Cyprien Forestier!

"Are you hurt, *Monsieur le Sénateur*?"

"No, I don't think so"—Forestier smoothed his garments mechanically, reached into the car for a colonial helmet—"but somewhat stiff. My young companion believed it necessary to kneel on my back most of the time. You're devilishly heavy, Vannoy—eh, Vannoy, Captain?"

The staff-officer had disappeared.

"The captain is on the other side of the car," a leathery Legionnaire volunteered discreetly. His whisper, his polite, deprecating gesture, could be understood better when Granel heard retching behind the machine. It was unbelievable, it was shameful, but Captain Vannoy was ill! Well, Granel mused, a desk job with the staff at Rabat is no preparation for seeing young men with ugly holes in their skulls.

Senator Forestier flushed, then noticed the corpse and went white again.

"Dead? Poor young man—I as good as killed him. And my chauffeur—I had no business exposing him. A middle-aged man I've had for nine years, Lieutenant—married, with children!" He appealed to Granel: "One hears about the dangers here and never believes them. I was delayed at lunch, at Post Aguelmou, and the trucks went on. I saw that it had been prearranged, to prevent my going further. The lieutenant commanding advised not to start, protested. But he did not dare restrain us by force. I was foolishly afraid of seeming afraid. A man in my position can't afford—and Captain Vannoy also thought we could risk it—"

"A matter of luck," Granel sought to comfort him; "you might have passed without trouble ninety-nine times out of a hundred—a matter of luck—"

Dubosq came near, scowling.

"Luck? That's easy to say. Taking chances with your life is one thing.

Forcing others, who know the risks, yet must obey, is another. You're careless with the voters, Senator!"

Forestier winced: "Lieutenant, you can't tell me anything I don't feel. If I could exchange my life for his, I would. I hope you believe that."

"I do, yes," Dubosq nodded. "It must be a rotten sensation. Makes all the difference in the world when you have to see the corpses you manufacture, eh?" The officer laughed, short and bitter: "Forget it—the Chambers have sent thousands to the same fate and never worried about it. Never blame yourself for the faults of humanity at large." Dubosq offered his hand: "My name's Dubosq!"

"Dubosq?" Forestier shook eagerly. "Haven't I seen you before?"

"No, Senator. I'm seldom lucky enough to be in France, and when I am, it is unlikely that we frequent the same places."

Captain Vannoy reappeared. He had composed himself and made a good showing. Granel considered his slender, athletic body in the tailored khaki uniform, appreciated his well-bred, intellectual face, the renewed assurance in his glance.

"Sorry, Lieutenant—I believe we had better carry on—"

A Legionnaire had thrown up the hood of the machine, inspected the motor. He came forward, saluted.

"That job won't move again, Lieutenant," he reported. "Not without repairs. Distributer—"

"Roll it off the road," Granel ordered.

"Are you certain your man knows his business?" Vannoy asked.

"Foreman for Fiat, in Milan, Captain," the Legionnaire snapped.

"I really meant—it is a costly machine, and the natives will probably strip it before we can return with—"

"I wouldn't be surprised, Captain," Granel conceded. "But we cannot undertake to push it by hand."

"Your car, Captain?" Dubosq asked with mock solicitude.

"No. It belongs to the Senator."

"Oh, I thought perhaps—" Dubosq ended with a shrug. Granel recognized the first symptoms of one of his fits of rebellion and temper. Vannoy was a type which Dubosq, genuine Legionnaire, detested, the cultured, dapper, supercilious officer in a specialized service. A natural foe . . .

"Sergeant!" he snapped, "make stretchers for the wounded man and for the body. Can't leave him"—Granel turned to the Senator, who nodded understanding: "Mutilation"—"and detail some one to carry the Senator's bags. Monsieur Forestier, I regret that I must ask you to go on foot. Seven or eight miles—"

"I play golf a good deal," Forestier reassured him.

Granel saw that the heavy-set, aging man was already perspiring. Chasing his little ball at Deauville and Le Touquet in comfortable clothing was no training for a hike in snug shoes under a Moroccan sun. But Forestier appeared to be willing, and Granel liked him better.

"Let's go—"

Again, a corporal and two men took the lead. Forestier strode easily at first, then developed a slight limp. He did not complain, talked fluently. He was curious about the Legionnaires, pointed out a man, another. Granel gave him what information he could.

At the end of three miles, Forestier's coat was soaked beneath the arms and at the back. Beads of sweat edged his round chin, pearly his thick brows. But he made a better showing than Vannoy, who strode on his riding boots as if treading on eggs.

The scouting group halted, the corporal signaled: Riders!

But there was no cause for alarm. It was a platoon from the Post, led by Lieutenant Guerrat, a broad-should-

dered, stork-legged, affable young man, who dismounted to greet the Senator.

"Telegram reached us announcing your departure from Agelmou. I was sent out to meet you." He continued in a lower tone: "Captain Rivières asked me to tell you that although he guessed you have been attacked, nothing will be communicated to the outside without your consent. He understood at once the effect a false rumor would have had on your numerous interests in Europe."

Forestier wiped his chin and grinned.

"Say, do you know I had forgotten the business end of this? First time in years—scared right out of my worries!"

"Do you ride, Senator?" Guerrat asked.

Captain Vannoy was already astride a horse.

"Yes," Forestier admitted. "I served three years in the cavalry, thirty-six years ago. However, if you will not be offended, I'll keep on afoot, with my friends of the Legion."

"I shall precede you then, within call," Guerrat concluded.

Forestier resumed the march. His wind was not what it should have been. His past was filled with too many fine dinners, too much wine and liqueurs, too many cigars. Granel expected him to break early. The last two miles must have been sheer torment, walking at the long route step of the Foreign Legion. The temptation to change his mind and get into the saddle must have been overwhelming at times.

But Monsieur Cyprien Forestier was a gentleman and a politician. He knew that he subtly flattered his rescuers of the Legion by his enduring suffering to remain with them. The Legionnaires, in turn, appreciated the courtesy, admired his endurance and courage.

A half-company in dress uniform, buttons gleaming, presented arms before the gateway to the Post, while the drums and bugles played. Captain Rivières, wearing epaulets, medals, white gloves,

hastened to greet his famous guest. Rivières was a good officer, but with a persistent belief that he was meant for great stations provided he encountered the right people. He counted on Forestier to get him his fourth stripe, his battalion and the rosette of the Legion of Honor.

Granel, who had seen the captain walk unconcerned under fire, was amused at his timidity on this occasion: "*Monsieur le Sénateur*, may I assure you that I deplore the unfortunate events—"

And his hushed, respectful voice murmured all the way across the yard to the officers' quarters, as if he felt personally to blame for the attack. He sounded like a respectable matron apologizing because the piano is found out of tune by a celebrated musician. Forestier listened absent-mindedly, no doubt thinking how delightful it would be to soak his feet in a pail of lukewarm water.

Granel and Dubosq, who shared the same room, changed to white uniforms for dinner. Dubosq was merry, whistling out of tune as he adjusted his ribbons.

"Say," he blurted out suddenly, "I bet you I go to Meknes with you day after tomorrow—and not only that, but that I have a swell time and spend practically nothing—"

Granel laughed: "You were away two months ago. I'm leaving—the Old Man will never let go of you."

Dubosq hooked the fastenings of his tunic collar, glanced at himself in the mirror. He did not appear displeased, for he was vain concerning his handsome face. Unfortunately, Granel had learned that the average woman shared his opinion of his charm. Dubosq was famous for his fascination of the fair sex in three regiments on three continents.

"If you had served in the ranks, you'd understand my system," Dubosq added. "Smooth, simple and unfailing. Tested by four generations of Legionnaires."

Granel nodded, smiled: "A hundred francs, then."

"Which I'll collect when we pass Camp Bataille, rolling into Meknes. Many thanks!"



THE kitchen had hummed like a hive for hours. The cook, like the majority of Legion cooks, was reputed to have been a chef in a palatial hotel before enlisting. There had been evenings when Granel, confronted with thin lamb stew pompously listed as *navarin aux pommes*, had held strong doubts. But he had been threatened with losing his job on this occasion, possibly with a few days in cell, and he sent out an amazing dinner, time and place taken into consideration.

The fried fish, the roasted haunch of wild boar with mushrooms, could be explained by the proximity of river and forest. But the assorted *hors d'oeuvres*, the delicate *crêpes* served as *entremet*, must have been materialized within the Post by some miraculous intervention. The tragedy of the afternoon dwindled far into the past as the vintage wines succeeded one another. Another miracle occurred when champagne appeared, perfectly chilled.

Rivieres was in fine spirits. He had outlined to Forestier all his campaigns, all his claims to governmental consideration. Captain Vannoy, who seemed like a man who had never shaken with fear, was witty and cordial.

There were nine men grouped at the big table in the cool, spacious mess room: Rivieres, presiding; on his right Forestier, Guerrat of the *Spahis*, the medical lieutenant of the Post and Sub-Lieutenant Cortelli of the Legion. On his left were Vannoy, the lieutenant in charge of the Native Affairs' office at Bou Ghentour, Granel and Dubosq. As the evening wore on, with fine coffee—the cook had not been economical—and an assortment of squat and elongated bottles, phials and containers on the table, an atmosphere of easy friendli-

ness and social cheer had settled in the light of the fluttering lamp.

The happiness had spread in widening eddies to the outside, to the barracks, to those on duty in the stables. In honor of the distinguished visitor, Rivieres had doubled the wine ration for all, and the Senator had discreetly suggested that it be doubled again at his expense. Cigars, cigarettes had been distributed to the Legionnaires. Alert non-coms were making rounds, warning sentries not to fire upon dislodged pebbles and fluttering papers, as shots might alarm guests not accustomed to Middle Atlas nights.

Granel was ill at ease; Dubosq was drinking hard, and while there was no danger that he would grow sodden and foolish, having learned to drink young, like a Legionnaire, drink made him quarrelsome at times. Moreover, Dubosq disliked Vannoy and when the captain spoke in his precise, drawling parlor voice, he would mumble ironic comments. Granel elbowed him for this several times.

"What's the matter with you? Keep still—"

"That guy makes me sick—"

"What of it? He's a captain—"

"That's what hurts! Did you see him collapse this afternoon? 'Pass the smelling salts, please!' And just listen to Rivieres: 'Mister Senator, will you be so kind as to spit in my eye—in my right eye, please?'"

"Shut up; don't make a fool of yourself," Granel advised.

The conversation rolled on to business, had turned to the possibility of oil being discovered in Morocco. Commercial words, odd in this room where fighting men gathered normally, echoed: Batum, Java, Oklahoma, wells and barrels, output per day and hour, money, foreign rates of exchange.

"Eh, Doctor," Dubosq spoke in a loud voice, purposely.

The medical officer turned, shocked out of a dream of quick money.

"What is it, Dubosq?"

"How was the chauffeur when you left him?"

The conversation was suspended. All turned their faces toward Dubosq. The captain's expression showed plainly that Rivieres knew there was a time and a place to mention gloomy subjects.

"Has a fair chance. Lung punctured, of course—and he's not very strong. Recent change in climate and diet don't help. Two of the fingers had to come off. I have given him camphorated oil injections, and if he reacts to them, he'll be out of danger."

"Lucky fellow," Dubosq stated sarcastically. "Do you know that he had hold of a little pistol? There's one man who didn't lose his nerve."

After a brief silence, Forestier spoke.

"Lieutenant Dubosq is quite right to remind us of those less fortunate. Vannoy, will you be so good as to inform yourself concerning that dead lad's family? We cannot bring him back to life, but we can compensate to some measure those left behind. I shall make it a point to attend to that. Perhaps because I feel morally guilty—"

Granel could see that Forestier was sincere. Moreover, the politician had risked his own life, proof enough that he had not believed there was mortal danger. It was merely the simple, cruel law of life in action, that the living should enjoy a good meal. Dubosq understood this. Granel had been with him on sprees after returning from campaigns in the hills in which old friends had been killed.

Forestier appeared to think a while, then resumed.

"I understand that Lieutenant Granel is coming to Meknes on leave soon. Captain Rivieres, would you grant me a favor? Lieutenant Dubosq was present also, and I would like to introduce them to my family—"

"I imagine it could be arranged. The colonel would have to be consulted—"

"I know him personally and I guarantee his permission."

"In that case—" Rivieres said. But his eyes sought Sub-Lieutenant Corbelli's as if to say: "Who cares how much work falls on our backs?"

"Lieutenant Dubosq," Forestier called. "Monsieur?"

"Would you please me by accepting leave? My wife, my child, will wish to thank you."

"If my captain will permit—" Dubosq said piously; "I wouldn't want to disturb the routine here. Thank you, Captain—" The ghost of a smile played on his lips, and he allowed the conversation to resume—"I'm not an expert, but I have seen spots near Asserdoun that seem likely to contain oil—"

CHAPTER II

"GET UP AND TAKE IT"



THREE days later, Dubosq collected the amount of the bet at the appointed place. Granel wondered just what Forestier's motive in obtaining leave for the lieutenant had been. He considered the idea that the financier had been impressed by his comrade's frankness.

The party of four, Forestier, Vannoy, Granel and Dubosq, reached Meknes. Forestier and Vannoy lived in the big hotel constructed on the road to the European section, a luxurious place accommodating the wealthiest tourists. The Senator urged the young men to accept his hospitality there. Granel was tempted, but Dubosq winked meaningly: "We appreciate your kindness, but—"

"Understood," Forestier said, tapping his shoulder, laughing.

The two Legion lieutenants stopped at a more modest hotel near the bus terminal, some distance from Dar-el-Baroud in the native town. They re-

ported at the Legion barracks, and then were free for seven long days.

Dubosq led the way to a small cafe, kept by a former Legionnaire. There he could obtain absinthe, Legion style, and had unlimited credit. He and the owner had been comrades in Indo-China. Dubosq lighted a cigarette, puffed toward the ceiling, stretched himself with obvious enjoyment.

"Now, do you understand how I got to Meknes, old man?"

"Not in the least," Granel replied frankly. "If I had been old Forestier, I wouldn't have wanted to listen to your remarks longer."

"Any Second-Class Legionnaire would guess. I'm here as a witness. Look at this—" Dubosq unfolded a newspaper, showed headlines mentioning Forestier: "Senator thinks oil discoveries probable. An item from Mogador, more hopeful than accurate, to the effect that he will examine the *argan* oil industry. He dabbles in everything. He has just visited Algeria, is going on to Senegal. That means one thing; he's looking for the portfolio of Colonial Minister in the next change of cabinet."

"Logical, so far. But where do you enter, Dubosq?"

"If a Legionnaire happens to see a sergeant drunk on the street and helps him out, he doesn't talk to others. He's got something precious. The sergeant will treat him well, until he can get rid of him by getting him a soft snap outside the ranks. All one has to do is to mention liquor. You must have some proof, though. A form of blackmail, as you see, but legitimate. Well, there are things about that ambush Forestier doesn't want known. For instance, that he was pig-headed about starting against all advice. Then that he spent all of it flat on his stomach in the car. And that his pet, Vannoy, was scared stupid. And that the real heroes were the dead guy and the poor slob of a chauffeur, who actually tried to use a pop-gun fit for a

lady's handbag. One's dead. The other is dependent on his boss and won't talk. That leaves two men for the newspapermen to question: you and me.

"You're a gentleman and an officer. You would not be dirty enough to spread the story. But Forestier thinks I might be. He had to befriend me, to muzzle me with favors. He got me leave, and he'll supply entertainment." Dubosq gestured: "I'm an officer second, a Legionnaire first. I take the good things of life when they come my way."

"You think the truth would harm Forestier?"

"Eh? Plenty, my friend. The opposition press would call him a ruthless butcher and an ass."



DUBOSQ was proved right very soon.

When the two called at the palatial hotel for dinner that evening, on urgent invitation, they were photographed and questioned by reporters. And Granel noticed that the lieutenant's protests at Aguedoul were not mentioned by Forestier, who mildly protested against tales of his heroism already printed.

"All we did was to defend ourselves," he narrated. "There was no time to think. The motor was smashed almost at once, we stopped, and there was the infernal rattling of bullets on tin. No, I'm not sure that we killed any of the attackers. There were six bodies found near the road by patrols sent later, but we cannot be certain that they were not killed by the Legionnaires who rescued us."

Granel was certain: The hillmen slain had been dropped by his groups, and Dubosq had personally attended to two. But it would have needed a special brand of courageous honesty to speak up and correct the Senator just then.

Dubosq was amused. But he bowed impeccably over the fat hand of Madame Forestier and acknowledged.

his introduction to Jeanne, the daughter, with the polite, subtle yet very plain admiration he granted all beautiful women, and even, on occasions, less charming ones. Jeanne was tall and blond, with a gentle, daintily modeled face, and a melting smile. Her interest in Dubosq, although carefully screened, was immediately evident. Granel had the impression, as Dubosq looked at Jeanne, that two very skilled antagonists had crossed blades.

This perturbed him somewhat, because he believed that both had stepped out of their class, did not play the game with the same rules. Then he realized, from the mother's attitude, from certain little actions of Vannoy, that Jeanne and the staff-captain were semi-officially engaged. Dubosq would note this, and delight in cutting the dandy out.

The dinner was served in a private dining-room of Forestier's suite. Dubosq and Jeanne managed to be together, although it was plain that other seating arrangements had been made. And they lost little time.

"Father has spoken so much about you, Lieutenant Dubosq. I'm awfully curious. It seems you enlisted as a private and have done all sorts of heroic things. Adventures and—"

"Few of them," Dubosq beamed on her. "Sad to relate, one progresses mostly because of good behavior in garrison rather than because of bravery in the field. The brave are killed off quickly."

"But there are epic moments, aren't there?"

"I suppose so. But you see, a Legionnaire acts heroically much as Monsieur Jourdain spoke prose all his life, without knowing it. We leave it to the studious branches of the army to grow lyrical"—Dubosq's glance rested innocently on Captain Vannoy, member of the staff, to see this shaft sink in. "Take the affair of the other day, for instance, when your father was attacked. Until I

read the papers, I didn't realize its importance." Dubosq held up his hand swiftly: "Please don't say that you wish you had been a man to become a Legionnaire. Both thoughts pain me greatly."

"Really," she laughed; "what shall I talk about?"

"You. What do you like to do? I warn you I haven't played tennis in ten years. No courts. But I ride very tolerably, and, having been stationed in Meknes months on end, I know the town very well—" He spread his hands, waved them like an Arab: "Guide, very good guide, Miss, very cheap, little money, nearly nothing, guide!"

"You're irresistible—"

Granel would have liked to listen, but Madame Forestier wished to compare notes with him. She headed the charity organization for her husband's factories and mines, and that was almost like caring for Legionnaires, wasn't it? Did his men suffer from too much meat? She understood that army cooks were inclined to neglect vegetables and salads.

After the dinner, the party went to the big ballroom, where an orchestra was playing. As Granel had expected and feared, Dubosq was striving to interest Jeanne and was succeeding. The feud between him and Vannoy was almost open. The Legionnaire was gaining steadily, dancing, talking, flattering, shocking, while Vannoy hovered about, pale and furious. Granel's repeated signals to make a break were ignored by his friend.

It was after one o'clock when a taxi drove them back toward the native quarter. Granel wished to visit a night club, hungry for shabby surroundings after the glitter of the decorous hotel. To his astonishment, Dubosq turned town the suggestion.

"Count me out, old man," he pleaded.

"What?" Granel could not believe his ears.

"I've got a date with the kid for eight o'clock in the morning, to show her

minarets and things. I don't want to have a hang-over and act like a boob. She's a pretty girl and not at all dumb." Dubosq realized how far this was from his usual attitude toward women, and added half-heartedly: "Stuck on herself and spoiled. But pretty, eh?"

"Better drop it. You'll get Vannoy sore, to start with. He has pull. Then you don't want to waste your leave holding hands, even with a pretty kid with a lot of dough. Come with me—"

"Sorry, no—" Dubosq proved stubborn.

Granel was disgusted with him. He felt that nothing good would come of the association with Jeanne. Then he consoled himself with the thought that Dubosq never remained interested in one girl long. He went on alone, after dropping his comrade at their hotel. But he did not meet any one he knew, and ended by paying three hundred francs for a cracking headache and a feeling of loneliness.



THIS was merely the beginning. Dubosq was away constantly with Miss Forestier. He played tennis in white flannels and multicolored sweater; he rode with Jeanne, guided her about the city, attended teas and dances with her. Granel soon grew tired of seeing Vannoy suffer, sought old friends among the officers stationed in Meknes. Dubosq's behavior was commented upon.

"Your friend is certainly rushing the Senator's daughter," one of his acquaintances remarked. "He knows which way his bread is buttered; and even without a stock of Northern Steel Bonds, that blond child is worth some attention."

This alarmed Granel. He had expected to have Dubosq drop the pursuit within forty-eight hours, but days passed and his interest in Jeanne was obviously increasing. Madame Forestier drew Granel aside, during a luncheon, and tactfully questioned him about Dubosq. Who was his father? How much



private income did he have? What prospects? Was it true that he was wild and violent? Granel was overcome by a reflex of loyalty. Although aware that his friend did not have a *sou* outside of his army pay, he claimed ignorance. And he pictured him as a Quixotic character, heroic and gentle, unspoiled by his early contacts.

"His Legionnaires, Madame, consider him a demi-god. And Legionnaires are hard to please," he concluded. He might have added that the qualities admired by members of the Regiments of Foreign Infantry were scarcely those of a good husband for a delicate, very blond daughter.

With a smearing of shoe-polish, Vannoy could have played Othello. He was pathetic, in his London-cut breeches, riding-crop under one arm, watching the pair anxiously, or consulting a watch nervously when they disappeared together.

Granel contrived to corner Dubosq between tennis and dinner on the fifth day: "What are you doing tonight?"

"By the way, I was forgetting, old man, you're in on this!"

"I have a date—"

"Break it. We need you. A couple of

Jeanne's friends have just arrived from France. We have hooked Vannoy to escort the plainer one, and you're nominated to squire the other. Civilian dress, not too formal—showing them Meknes by night, as tourists do not know it. Get the idea?"

Granel rose and grasped his friend by the shoulder.

"Where do you think you'll get to with all this?" he asked.

"With all what?"

"First thing you know, you'll be getting married to that girl."

"Oh, that? It's all fixed," Dubosq said calmly.

"How will you support her?"

"Don't need to. Her old man will give her a lot of dough, and I can shake him for a good, soft job." Dubosq laughed: "Oh, I know more names for that than you do. But I really love her."

Granel knew that it would be useless to argue against a man in love. But something had to be done to save an excellent Legionnaire from becoming a poor civilian. The marriage, of course, would not last three months; Dubosq was too independent, too changeable, too much of an adventurer to settle down to an existence of well-bred excursions, office work and marital contentment.

But those three months might wreck him. He was not a school officer, did not intend to continue in army service. He would resign his commission and might have a difficult time re-entering the service. Furthermore, he would grow bitter—and Granel did not know what he might do when Jeanne left him. Ten years of Legion had not taught him to accept defeat peacefully. That Jeanne would leave him, Granel never doubted. Dubosq's reckless behavior had caused more sophisticated girls than she to become jealous, furious. A man who enjoys life as if he were to leave it any moment is not meant for a well-regulated, civilized existence.

Jeanne, as a matter of cold fact, did not know Dubosq. She saw and admired a surface form, enjoyed a sensation of having tamed something wild and primitive she did not altogether understand. It was hopeless to suggest to Dubosq that he tell her about himself—Dubosq, for the moment, sincerely believed that he was what Jeanne believed him to be.

Granel had the first inkling of a plan when Dubosq appeared from his room, garbed in tweeds. The suit was well-cut, fitted, the shirt, tie, kerchief and socks matched. The hat was an expensive felt, the shoes those called for by style. But Dubosq nevertheless did not seem at ease, appeared to be wearing a disguise. There was a stiffness to his shoulders, an undefinable awkwardness in his wrists, familiar little gestures when the thumb sought for the garrison belt, that marked him for a soldier.

"Come along," he invited.

They met the others at the Transat Hotel. Vannoy looked very handsome in a pastel gray suit, wearing a monocle. Granel liked his partner, a diminutive brunette with a well-molded, solid figure, snapping dark eyes, all agog over things Moroccan. The party repaired to a night-club in the New Town. Dubosq danced with Jeanne and eyed other men with a superior air. It was this that crystallized Granel's decision.

"Dubosq, do you think our charming friends would be interested in seeing Marinette's?" he asked.

"I don't," Dubosq snapped.

"What's Marinette's?" Jeanne asked.

"A night-club in the native quarter, not much different from this. But it is frequented by non-commissioned officers almost exclusively, with a sprinkling of tough civilians." Granel smiled: "It is less decorous than this place."

"Forget it," Dubosq said. "Let's dance."

"Listen," one of the newly arrived girls spoke up, "we can't be shocked.

Why, I was shown through the Bousbir in Casablanca by my friends. What's the use of seeing Morocco if all you look at is what you get on postal cards? I say Marinette's!"



FIVE minutes later, they were whirled in a car to Marinette's, lost in a narrow street near the Mosque Sidi Ahmed Bou Khadra. An oblong electric sign glittered in the dark passage. The young ladies uttered shrilled little yelps of mock terror.

After a dingy passage, they entered a spacious room, crowded. There was a jazz orchestra, tables with shaded lamps, the trappings of the standardized night-club the universe over. There were dancers, singers, the brigade of *entraîneuses*, paid entertainers who made the strangers feel at home. The majority of the men were non-coms in uniform, khaki for the majority, dark blue for the aviators. The exotic note was supplied by a giant black sergeant of Senegalese, seated alone at a corner table, and by three or four Arab soldiers.

"Here's Loulou," several voices called, "hello, Louis, hello, Dubosq—" and the orchestra played the Legion's marching song. Granel was glad to see that Dubosq was not so far lost as to be indifferent to this flattering ovation.

"Champagne," he called.

According to his old custom, he tossed the markers for the champagne to the nearest entertainers, who could collect a small commission on them. Here he was in familiar surroundings, and the veneer vanished fast. He drank hard and fast, danced like a maniac. Vannoy polished his eye-glass and tapped the table with his fingers.

"Your comrade really enjoys these places, doesn't he?" he addressed Granel.

"So do I," Granel confessed. "After a sojourn in the hills, it's living, uncomplicated pleasures, noises. Then only is one sure he has not been killed. Have

you ever gone on an expedition, Captain?"

"In Syria, yes—for three months."

"If you come with the column, next month, you'll look back on this evening at times—" Granel watched Dubosq, dancing with Jeanne. And he noticed for the first time that a new character had appeared, exactly what he had wished for.

It was a man, a tall, large, rough-faced, self-confident man with too much drink in him, and a sergeant of Colonial Artillery to make him more perfect. He wore three rows of decorations, wore long service chevrons. His career could be read on his chest: France, Salonika, Syria, Morocco, Senegal, Madagascar, Tonkin. He beckoned to a pretty, wistful girl, from her accent a Central European.

He was hard, and thought himself harder. He was not drunk, but belligerent from drinking. Fierce energy strained for release in his massive body, darted from his beady eyes. Granel knew the symptoms: he was spoiling for a fight. And Dubosq would gravitate to him as steel filings to a magnet.

"Champagne! Champagne!"

Marinette, the owner, a dark, stout woman of forty-five, leaned from behind the bar to speak to a pair of burly chaps. They were *de luxe* bouncers, doubtless graduates of the penal camps. Their eyes followed the Colonial.

What followed was inevitable. When he had suggested this visit, Granel had known what would happen. It was like mixing known chemicals to obtain a given reaction. A pretty girl, Dubosq, drink, music, a belligerent stranger; all the requirements for a row were there.

Jeanne attracted attention. Some of the entertainers were as pretty, as young and younger. But men sensed, without knowing quite why, a distinct charm, something different. Her aloof smile seemed a challenge. The Colonial Artilleryman saw her. Dubosq, returning

from a dance, caught his glance, frowned: "What's that bum looking at? If I catch him at it again, I'll speak to him."

"You talk like a small boy," Jeanne chided him with impatience.

Vannoy looked over at the big man, and thoughtlessly poured gasoline on the fire: "He appears rather large, able-bodied and truculent," he declared. "An informal conversation with him might prove strenuous, in his condition."

"Him?" Dubosq smiled coldly: "Just a tramp. Cute kid, that—"

He indicated a Czechoslovakian girl who was singing an American song in bad French. The artilleryman had risen, and dodged more or less gracefully to avoid her as he crossed the dance floor. He rested a large, bronzed, meaty hand on the back of Jeanne's chair, addressed Vannoy with exaggerated politeness. Probably, the captain's monocle had stirred some latent resentment deep within him.

"May I have permission to ask Made-moiselle to dance when the music starts again?"

Dubosq's eyes did not leave the singer, his expression did not change. But his body stiffened, and muscles twitched on his hard jaws. The bouncers stepped nearer, quietly.

"This is a private party, Monsieur," Vannoy replied.

"Thank you very much," Jeanne smiled up at the Colonial soldier. "I am very sorry to refuse, but you understand—"

The Colonial was abashed by her smile, embarrassed. But he felt that he had to make another effort, as his request had been public, and he had his pride to cover: "Maybe you'd sooner dance with a soldier—"

"My dear chap—" Vannoy protested mildly. He was nervous and tense, and Granel heard Jeanne whisper to him: "Please, Victor, no scandal—my father—" and the captain added: "Made-

moiselle is tired just now." And he peered over his shoulder toward the attendants, nodded.

"This establishment is for soldiers," the big chap insisted. "If you don't want to mix with us, why—"

Dubosq turned his head slowly.

"I'm a Legionnaire. Does that suit you?"

"A Legionnaire? Ashamed of wearing your uniform?"

"Not in the least—" Dubosq reached out, gripped the hand resting near Jeanne's shoulder between finger and thumb, pried it loose and dropped it gingerly: "Sorry you must leave us so soon, my friend."

"Stand up, stand up and I'll—"

The rest was somewhat confused, as is always the case in such brawls. Granel heard Marinette's sharp voice ordering the bouncers to allow Dubosq to settle his quarrel alone. The orchestra ceased playing, the singer ran off the dance floor, chair legs rasped, dishes and glasses clattered.

Dubosq was standing, and the artilleryman was sprawled, with his nose bleeding. . . .

Somewhere, some time in the intervening second, there had been the meaty impact of knuckles on flesh. And the veteran Legionnaire was poised solidly, his lips drawn back, his hunched biceps hauling the sleeves up his forearms, waiting for his adversary to arise, murmuring in a soft, coaxing tone:

"Get up, you swine, get up and take it. Come, little one, come!"



JEANNE gasped at him in horrified fascination. This was not the man she knew. Dubosq was in the grip of his dominating passion, the urge that had made him leave the university, organized society. A hundred similar brawls were behind him, in twenty-five assorted establishments of this kind the world over. He was no longer a human being,

but a dangerous fighting machine, all alert brain, quick nerves and steely muscles. His affection for Jeanne, all considerations, had vanished before an older, more potent emotion.

"Look out, Lou—" some one screamed.

The artilleryman was rising. Somehow, he had laid his hand on the neck of a bottle. Dubosq weaved, streaked forward in a guarded, peculiar shuffle. He moved his head a fraction of an inch, the container missed his skull and crashed against a wall.

Then he was at work. It was not boxing, it was not wrestling nor *savate*. It was a fearsome, efficient slashing down of the bigger man with fists, feet, skull, elbows and knees.

The Colonial stood up for a few seconds, gamely. Then he fell on all fours, slipped laterally along the polished floor, ridiculous, pitiful.

Dubosq helped him to rise, only to knock him down again. His panting breath, his mutters of rage, could be heard through the tumult. He groaned when he lashed out, like a man plying a heavy axe, throwing his whole being into the blows. He was superb and terrifying, sublime and disgusting.

"Get up, sweetheart, get up and take it—"

Jeanne was gaping, clutching Vannoy's arm for support, whispering: "Oh, stop him, somebody, stop him!"

When the dazed artilleryman obeyed, Dubosq gripped his arm, pulled him forward to smash him with his knee. The big fellow bent, tumbled, his head thudding on the floor. He was out. The bouncers picked him up, carried him away, and the orchestra resumed playing, as the singer reappeared.

Dubosq returned toward the table, striving to wipe the fighting mask, the rapture of physical conflict, from his face. He chuckled sheepishly. His hair was ruffled, his coat torn at a shoulder seam; absent-mindedly, he licked his bruised knuckles. There were tiny flecks

of blood on his white collar, on his cuffs. A livid bruise was swelling under his left cheekbone, where a chance blow had struck; it resembled a ripening plum.

"He looked for it," he explained, not without some pride.

Somehow, he reminded Granel of a terrier bringing a rat on the parlor rug. He appeared startled to see the others standing, ready to leave, Vannoy holding Jeanne's wrap ready.

"It's over," he assured. "Let's sit down—or go elsewhere, if you prefer."

"Many thanks, I have seen enough," Jeanne looked at him, furious.

Dubosq awkwardly wrapped his scraped knuckles in a silk handkerchief taken from his breast-pocket. In an instant, the thin tissue grew red. The girl stared at it, shuddered. Granel followed her thoughts: the real Dubosq had been concealed from her, as those knuckles were hidden by the silk.

"Captain Vannoy will see us home—good night!"

Dubosq considered her; slowly the fading fighting gleam in his pupils grew in intensity again.

"You've often asked me about Legionnaires. Well, you saw one at play to-night."

"Please don't make it worse," she retorted.

"I'll call in the morning—" Dubosq offered.

"No need," she said coldly.

She turned and walked toward the door. Vannoy seemed genuinely sorry for Dubosq at the moment. He gestured helplessly, whispered:

"A bit upset. All new and strange to her. Don't worry, it'll pass. Coming, Granel?"

Granel was lighting a cigarette. Vannoy's words reminded him that he had a social duty to perform, that he was under obligation to escort the ladies to the hotel. But he was unwilling to leave Dubosq, knowing that the Legionnaire would yield to fierce depression and vent

his temper on some innocent person unless Granel stayed. After all, these people did not count, not compared to the Legion.

"No, Captain. You will kindly offer my apologies?"

"Really," Vannoy started.

"There's the car waiting outside," Granel added softly: "There's nothing to be afraid of, this time."

The staff-captain left hastily. Dubosq had brushed the champagne bottles from the table, ordered absinthes. He considered Granel with a smile of intense self-derision.

"That 'this time' was worthy of me," he commented. "Well, that was a superb idea of yours to come here."

Granel nodded: "Yes, wasn't it? And I foresaw what would occur."

"You mean you knew I'd—make an ass of myself?" Dubosq's hands clenched. "Is that the idea?"

"Exactly," Granel admitted, sitting on the edge of his chair. He had no hope of beating Dubosq, but was unwilling to drink with him unless he knew the truth. His plan was to hold him until his temper cooled. But there was no need.

"You swine," Dubosq said affectionately. "You saw it would happen sooner or later—it's better that she looked at me that way before marriage. But what was I supposed to do? Snap my fingers for the bouncers? Call the cops? Ask her to dance with that brute?"

"I don't know," Granel shrugged.

Dubosq mused a while, laughed gently.

"It's a joke. You know, I intended to find one of those reporters before I left and tell him the entire truth about that attack: Forestier at the bottom of the car, Vannoy sick with terror, and that young five-sous-per-day private dying like a hero. The five shots at ten yards that hit no one. Then I got interested in the kid, and all that went up in smoke." He drained a glass: "Well, there are millions of girls."

"Millions," Granel agreed with ringing conviction.

"Suppose she'll marry Vannoy?"

"I'm not so sure," Granel answered thoughtfully. "And why not? Because he fussed with his eye-glass nervously, grew red in the neck and did nothing. You did too much, he not enough. Girls like Jeanne are stuffed with such charming alternatives. Drink it down—"

Granel knew that only half of his task was achieved. Jeanne would go home, get over the first horror of the blood flecks and of the animal-like licking of that bruised paw. By morning, she would have decided that she was indicated to train Dubosq for finer behavior. By eleven, there would be an invitation for luncheon, and very possibly a relapse for Dubosq.

So he kept his friend awake until dawn, and abruptly suggested that instead of remaining the last thirty-six hours, they leave for Bou Ghentour, to avoid embarrassing interviews with the parents and an official break. A word on a visiting card, and all would be over. Dubosq agreed.

And by the time the car entered the shallow depression of Ain Lorma, both were asleep in the back seat.

CHAPTER III

RAIDER'S PATROL



A few days later, the Legion garrison at Bou Ghentour was replaced by Moroccan *Tirailleurs*, freed to join the March Battalion of the Corps at the concentration camp of the Mobile Group near Kenifra. Granel remained with Captain Rivières' company, while Dubosq was placed in charge of a "free section," a picked aggregation specializing in dangerous raids and night patrols.

They saw little of each other during the march south.

There are officers in the French Army,

veterans of the World War, who affect amused tolerance for colonial operations. Nevertheless, war in the Moroccan hills exacts extreme endurance and energy. When the Jebel bou Haskar was in sight, there had been no major engagement, no glamorous struggle. But continuous skirmishes, an occasional brief combat, had taken lives, while disease and fatigue had decimated the column more than the foes' lead and steel. Dysentery, paratyphoid, pneumonia, infections, had taken their toll.

Facing the hills of Bou Haskar, goal of the expedition, the Mobile Group camped to await reinforcements from the North. Long rows of tents surged from the red earth; shallow protective trenches were dug to protect all four faces of the square, barbed wire unreeled. Then the men were permitted to rest.

Granel located Dubosq at the trader's shack, as he had expected, with a bottle before him. Dubosq had lost weight, his body seemed too thin for his faded khaki garments. On either side of his skull, closely cropped by a company barber, his weather-bitten ears jutted. His left hand was wrapped in a bandage, as he had collected a slash over the knuckles in a night venture.

"Tough so far, and it will be much tougher," he declared. His hand lifted to indicate the hills looming in the distant sky: "They're swarming out there, signal fires were burning last night. Some religious chieftain has told them that we cannot take the hills. The poor swine have been fooled a hundred times by such statements, but they believe him." He looked at the tricolor flag indicating the general's tent, across an open area, smiled and added: "And who are we to call them suckers! How's the company? Heard Lorenz was killed."

"When they attacked our flank-guard, two days ago, at Bab-el-Ghriss," Granel informed him. "Wounded, and died before anything could be done."

"A real Legionnaire," Dubosq voiced the finest praise he knew. "Odd, come to think of it. We reached Sidi-bel-Abbes with the same batch of recruits. He was a grown man, steady, sober, educated. I was just a crazy kid. Yet I'm a lieutenant, and he died a private. Heard anything from—Meknes?"

"No. Did you write her?"

"Why? Over is over, finished is finished."

"Did she write you?"

"Received nothing. But there were two batches of mail lost. When the truck was looted, and when a plane dropped a broken sack, the letters scattered in the wind over miles of brush, and maybe—" Dubosq broke off: "What matters?"

Snipers prowled about the camp all night. They killed a few mules in the artillery lines, wounded three men. One of them was Captain Rivieres, pierced through the thigh. Granel became temporary commander, and the battalion chief made no objections to assigning Dubosq's section to his company.

When the reinforcements arrived four days later, they were surprised to recognize Captain Vannoy, assigned to the general's staff. The tall, distinguished officer was unpopular, probably because rumor of his behavior under fire had been spread through the Legionnaires. At the first opportunity he came toward Dubosq, who ignored his outstretched hand, saluted coldly.

"I warned him not to speak to me outside the line of duty," the Legionnaire told Granel. "That mug's looking for a sock in the nose, and, captain or not, he'll get it if he speaks to me."

Granel realized that his comrade had developed a savage dislike for Vannoy, probably because the man had witnessed his humiliation, perhaps because he suspected that the captain had resumed his former standing with the Forestiers. Under these conditions, Granel felt it was best to avoid the staff-officer. Du-

bosq could be very touchy and he would sulk if some one knew his best friend was seen much with a man known as his enemy. It would be unjust, of course, but would perturb the company as a whole.

Vannoy cornered him one night, when Granel was on guard-duty in the protection trenches.

"Do you know, Granel, that the Forestiers were not pleased when you went off without seeing them? After all, they're not accustomed to being scorned by—"

"I wrote them a note of thanks, Captain."

"My name's Vannoy, old man! Of course, they gathered that the girl and Dubosq had fallen out. They imagined all sorts of things. I finally told them what had happened, to reassure them. I think they were rather relieved that the affair was ended. Dubosq, while a fine fellow, is scarcely the type to—"

"He's my friend, Captain."

"Right you are. Really, I admire him myself. I am afraid the feeling is not mutual, and I don't want a scene. Yet I have something I promised to deliver personally to him, you understand? Tell him to notify me—"

"Agreed, Captain."

Dubosq flew into an unreasonable rage at the news: "If he's enough of an ass to play messenger, that's his business. But I don't take messages from my old girl from her new friend!" He spoke with such conviction that Granel knew this was a question of Legionnaires' ethics, although obscure to him. "I know what it is. My photograph, a ring made from a medal, a couple of cheap trinkets I bought her. Well, he can—" The lieutenant suggested several fashions for disposing of the stuff.



FORTUNATELY, there was no occasion for the two to meet, for the Mobile Group moved on the following morning, the Legionnaires in the van.

There was very little fighting on that first day, but much marching and counter-marching to ascertain the intended line of resistance. The actual storming of the hills would be a strenuous undertaking.

Hundreds of riflemen were sheltered behind natural obstacles linking terraced villages one to the other. At dusk, the advance halted, the troops camping where darkness found them. Throughout the night there was desultory firing.

At dawn, the battalion's officers were called together, to receive the major's orders.

Granel scribbled in his note-book: "2/4/2—H 7—C 1757—H 11—Hill 12—H. 13.30—*Kasbah*."

Which, decoded, meant that Company Two, Fourth Battalion, Second Regiment, his outfit, was to start at seven in the morning toward map-curve seventeen-fifty-seven, to progress from there, at eleven, to the hillock designated as Number Twelve on the large-scaled sketch, and at one-thirty in the afternoon, advance upon a small village flanked by a dingy *kasbah*, or fortress.

Each company commander had definite directions. The companies would butt their way forward in rapid rushes, halt, start anew at a prearranged time known to the artillery, in an alternating yet co-ordinated onslaught which it was hoped would puzzle the enemy, keep him in doubt, prevent him from knowing precisely where to concentrate the defenders.

Bugles and trumpets resounded. At seven, Granel led his combat groups into the open, across comparatively easy terrain. This part was still more of a military demonstration than a combat. Right and left, the lieutenant saw other companies marching, in supple waves of khaki. Looking back, he could see supporting battalions coiling over the undulating soil like yellow and red snakes. The mountain batteries were drumming away at the villages.

All this offered a rather cheerful appearance, gave an impression of power and order. The battle was conducted scientifically, as if machines instead of beings of flesh and blood were being used. That impression of mechanical might continued as the mules of the ammunition *echelons* moved up, but diminished as the actual fighting line came nearer, until, at the point of contact, tense, nervous human beings formed a sensitive spearhead.

Granel smiled. It was possible for a general to direct a combat with his brain cold as if packed in ice, but the man who went in with rifle and grenade, with bayonet and knife, could not share this detached attitude.

On their side, the Berbers were putting up a splendid show. They held on, impeded the advance, dispersed, reformed, resumed shooting. They were guided by instinct rather than reasoning. Which meant that, although they probably would lose in the end, they contrived to win temporary successes here and there by sheer courage and craftiness. Welded from various tribes, possibly without a definite leader, each clan obeying its own chief, a certain intelligence and understanding was manifest.

Granel soon found out that they had guessed his line of march, knew that his ultimate goal would be the squat, brownish hulk of the *kasbah* in the sunlight distance. Doggedly, they sought the spots where the various units would hinge in their movements, to attack and dislocate these connections at the proper time. Europeans were unbeatable, they had learned, only when in formation. Scattered, coping man against man, they were at times inferior to themselves.

According to plan, Granel had hoped to reach his first objective, curve seventeen-fifty-seven, without loss. But the company dropped five men, literally riddled after a false move, surrounded,

hacked down in fifteen seconds. What had occurred in a small way might occur on an immense scale. One could not grow careless.

When he arrived, he ordered green smoke signals lighted. The section leaders placed their automatic rifles, and a long-range duel followed. News and rumors drifted along the lines, passed from man to man, often distorted.



AT eleven sharp, Granel rose, gave the signal.

He saw the first enemy corpses, stripped by their retreating comrades of garments, weapons and cartridges. There were white-bearded old warriors, and others barely more than children. Like the majority of his class, Granel felt a deep admiration for the people who fought with such savage abnegation for ancestral freedom. But regardless of theories, small groups always were crushed by large groups, now as in the past. The needs of millions submerged the rights of thousands.

As there was no cover on the flank of the hillock, the company progressed in a sweeping, steady advance. Dubosq's groups were in the lead, probing into clumps of bushes, under boulders, careful, alert, eager as questing hunting dogs. They threw a few hand-grenades, bayoneted a dozen stragglers.

On the top of the hillock, entrenching tools came into play. The village was not over a half kilometer away, and all the houses seemed held by marksmen. A plane soared overhead, and Granel had the canvas markers displayed on the ground. He permitted fatigue parties to go down to a brook, to fill canteens, and ordered the men to eat.

Dubosq joined him. He was munching on an enormous sandwich of sardines, held a two-quart canteen filled with wine. He was dirty, perspiring, his chin gleamed with dripping oil. But he was satisfied.

"Not too much breakage on our side," he said. "Better leave that *kasbah* to me. I've got a couple of loads handy with explosives. That gate will be down in ten seconds. Who's on our left? The First Company? There's a stone wall there, in the way, not shown on the map. They can't see it from where they are, but they'll find out when they come on over that ridge—" he gestured, bread in one hand, canteen in the other: "Get the idea? Maybe you could tip off the major. Might save a few guys."

"Liaison!" Granel called. A young, blond Legionnaire rose and hurried forward. He had been eating a bar of chocolate, and he was brown about the mouth. The officer wrote three lines in a page of his note-book, tore it off: "Battalion."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

"Wait a minute, Dreyse!" Dubosq called out. He was grinning, amused. "Granel, give me paper and pencil. Thanks." He scribbled hastily, tore out the page, folded it and added a few words on the outside: "Get the battalion liaison to either telephone or deliver that message. It's urgent."

Dreyse nodded and started off. The moment he was in the clear, bullets sought him, but he made it a point of pride to trot no faster, running with his arms bent to his chest, chin up, until he disappeared in a gully. Then Dubosq finished his meal, took a long swallow of wine.

"Bet you don't know who that's for?"

"Not hard to guess," Granel said. "Cognac ordered for tonight, in the village. You've done it before. If the major finds out why you use the liaison, he'll bawl you out."

"Wrong," Dubosq started to laugh: "That's for Vannoy. Very formal and polite. Like this: 'Lieutenant Dubosq understands that Captain Vannoy holds personal message for him. Unable to leave his post, he respectfully suggests that it be delivered to him on the firing

line.'" The Legionnaire shook as he pointed at the sun-blasted stretch of slope, deserted now, but still spiriting dust from an occasional warning bullet: "He'd never come over that without a steel umbrella!"

"He can't leave his post, either," Granel said.

"Why not? He's on the information job. He can't write reports until this is over, can he?" Dubosq concluded, seriously: "He can't say I didn't give him a chance to deliver it, now."

Dreyse returned, and assured Dubosq that he had handed the note to a man going to the staff. Somewhere on the field, the natives were counter-attacking. The fusillade swelled, ebbed, started again. Granel and Dubosq sought to see the action with field-glasses, but it was hard to determine where the Berbers sought to break the line. They saw fresh companies coming up to the threatened zone, suddenly dislocate into groups, like handfuls of grain thrown on a green carpet. Time passed.

"One-eighteen," Granel announced, looking at his watch.

"Twelve minutes to spare," a quiet voice spoke near by: "I thought I had time to make it!"

Granel turned, faced Captain Vannoy and saluted. It was impossible, fantastic, but there he stood, unruffled, his boots scarcely filmed with dust, the familiar handkerchief held in his hand. Dubosq's face was puzzled as he lifted his hand to his képi.

"You came quickly, Captain!"

"Oh, I rode all the way except the last stretch—left my horse with an outpost of auxiliaries. Valuable animal, you understand? Think they can be trusted not to lose him?" He nodded pleasantly when the speechless Granel gestured reassurance: "Good. Here it is, Dubosq."

His slender hand held out a long mauve envelope, sealed with matching wax.

"Thank you, Captain."

Vannoy produced a silver cigarette case, offered it: "I find them rather mild myself. Do you know, I'm acquiring a taste for troopers' tobacco?" He snapped a silver lighter, held the flame for Granel, for Dubosq, extinguished it, relighted it for his use: "This is a spot to respect venerable superstitions, eh? Mind if I got on with you? Obtained permission to attack with you. Down in writing, too—" he gave Granel a paper:

"Oh, nonsense," Vannoy protested blandly.

"Pick them up," Granel ordered. "Ready? *Allons-y!*"

As he stepped forward, he looked to the left, saw Dubosq and Vannoy side by side. The captain held a stick under one arm. His riding boots, his clean uniform, made him conspicuous. But it was too late to protest against his presence.

"Come on, come on—"



"Covers your responsibility."

Granel, somewhat chagrined, saluted again.

"At your orders, Captain."

"Nonsense. You stay in charge. I'm around as a spectator."

Dubosq was turning the envelope over and over in his grimy hands. But he did not open it, sliding it still sealed inside his tunic. He was considering Vannoy with a baffled, speculative glance. The captain had gone to stand near one of the automatic crews, was chatting with a sergeant, who was stirred to emulation and rose to indicate his targets. Then Vannoy returned toward the two lieutenants.

"I don't think these chaps are better than the Druses," he remarked. "That sergeant doesn't believe so, either. Almost time, isn't it? Dubosq, may I accompany you?"

"You would honor me by doing so, Captain."

CHAPTER IV

ATTACK



THE sections raced down the short slope, started up the easy incline ending at the village walls. The ground was cut by low walls of uncemented, dry stones, which must be hurdled. Proving that the charge had not been expected, some of the bodies in sight were still clad in the mountain *gandoura*, dead hands still clutched rifle or carbine. There had been no time to strip those slain by the last automatic-rifle bursts.

There was a steady, pattering crackle all about; the air was alive, humming. Invisible whips lashed the bushes and the branches of trees. Stones appeared to move of themselves, to explode in flying fragments under foot. When the artillery fire had ceased on the village, the Berbers had swarmed back to the loopholes and possibly four hundred rifles

were pouring bullets into the storming parties in this sector of the combat.

A man collapsed quietly. Another. A strange, shrill chanting could be heard, lifting in gusts above the fusillade: The freedom song of the hills, women and children cheering their men to the strife. The sharp detonations of repeating weapons were punctuated by heavier, booming reports, the smoke of ancient Chassepots, Gras, Martini and Minies straggled from the firing slots, shredded in the wind.

A man might well be slain here by a missile poured out and molded for use in the Crimean War!

The third stone fence enclosed a field studded with stumpy trees. The sections bobbed as the men straddled this obstacle like a field of runners taking low hurdles. Two or three men tumbled, slid ludicrously. But one of them did not rise again. And that insinuating, nerve-racking crackle of metal on earth, stone, wood, singing and whining, continued.

"Come on—"

The village was before them. Cortelli's section, on the right, reached grenade distance first. Arms were flung back, arched swiftly. There were explosions. Adobe was pulverized, rose in dark brown clouds fringed with gold by the sunlight. Khaki figures literally pressed against the walls, then spilled into human streams flowing at the base of the dwellings, men groping, seeking a gap, a breach, a chance to get at the enemies hidden within.

Gun butts smashed away, enlarging doors, loopholes, knocking out crumbling bricks. Bayonets gleamed in the dust and smoke. A shell or a grenade had ignited the matted straw lining of a roof, greasy streamers crept along the terraces in the gentle wind.

The center of the company reached the village. Granel had lost all sense of reality, of life, of danger, and his open palm rested on a wall. In his confused

brain, reason refused to vanish: He had about one hundred and fifty men. How many natives were in the village? Four, five hundred? A thousand?

Massacre, massacre—

He was an idiot to think of that. They would run, they must be running now, before the supporting battalions arrived. But if they did not run, what?

A gap in the wall, obscurity illuminated by flashes, hands on his shoulders, voices: "Lieutenant, this way! Lieutenant—" He thought with amazement: "Some one knows where he is; some one can think!" His ears ached, there was a sulfurous stench in his nostrils—

Then he was emerging into cool, moving air, into light again. He had passed through a house, climbed a ladder, stood on a terrace. A gun crew was preparing its weapon with feverish haste. The metal slot seemed to snap greedily at the metal magazine, the comforting, thunderous throbbing of the automatic started.

It swept narrow, dirty streets, piled with debris and manure, swept it of the living, killed the dead again, nuzzled further with its formidable stream of lead. Resistance was ended here. Granel turned his head, saw the scarlet *chechias* of the Algerian infantry strung like moving poppies in the orchards he had just crossed under fire.

He looked to the left: The *Kasbah* was still holding Dubosq's groups in check. Its loopholes flashed at intervals careful, well-aimed shots.

Granel saw a trio of Legionnaires run forward, huddle against the gate, straddling a prone figure. Evidently, a first attempt had failed. Where was Dubosq—he was ten yards behind, kneeling, crouching, and tugging at Vannoy's tunic to force him to cover.

Dubosq was urging Vannoy to be cautious!

Granel wondered whether he had gone mad, or if the captain had. This seemed



unbelievable. Then he understood why Vannoy was erect under fire, inviting death; why he had come with the Legion, why Dubosq was trying to save him. The man wished to prove he was not a coward, wanted to redeem his reputation before the men who had seen him tremble.

A muffled explosion; the gate was blown up, heavy oak, iron bars and clamps, a whole segment of the whole with it. The men who had fired the petard had leaped back, flattened on their stomachs. The path was cleared.

Vannoy tore himself free, and with Dubosq—Dubosq, the peerless Legionnaire, two strides behind, he plunged into the opening and vanished! He was the first of the attackers on the *Kasbah*.

Surely, the man deserved better than a desk job.

Supporting troops poured through the streets, other companies passed on the sides of the village, skirmished with the

stragglers. Bugles sounded, halting the pursuit before the excited men followed the Berbers into a maze of gullies opening beyond the town.



GRANEL made his headquarters in a dwelling within the village, almost untouched by shells. There, the section leaders reported, one by one, to mention their losses, to be assigned to tasks.

Last of all, Vannoy appeared with Dubosq. Both appeared in bad humor. Granel saw that the usually dapper captain had some reason. The front of his tunic was scorched beyond repair, he had lost his képi, his riding boots were lacerated, and he was dirty from head to foot. The

lieutenant indicated several old kerosene tins in a corner of the big, sparsely furnished room: "You can clean up, Captain!"

"You're impertinent," Vannoy shouted. "I'll pull your ears, do you hear me?" He shook a finger in Granel's face: "I'm thirty years old and a captain! And when it comes to guts, I have as much as you, do you hear that? As much as you!"

Unfortunately, Granel was not the only one who heard. Legionnaires crowded in the doorway, the narrow windows were obscured by grinning faces. The lieutenant sought to restrain his superior.

"I beg of you, Captain, please be—"

"I've been wanting to cuff you for three months, young ass! I am a coward, I have no guts? Dubosq was frank, but you are a hypocrite. Do you know why I was shaking that day, why I got behind the car to be sick? I had been

about to kill Forestier, on the verge of committing murder, do you realize that?" Vannoy took breath; he added in a calmer voice: "How could I know we would be rescued? So my duty was clear—to spare that old man torture, to prevent him from being taken alive.

"So when that Legionnaire of yours, looking more like a brigand than a soldier, appeared on the road, I believed it was the end. I fired a few shots at random to hold him off, to gain time to blow Forestier's brains out. A decision like that snaps your nerves. Then I heard you calling out in French, and I thought I was delirious. My finger was pulling on the trigger when I stopped, aware that it was true, that I wasn't dreaming. A fifth of a second later, and Forestier would have been dead, murdered, murdered by me! Do you see why I had a reaction, do you?"

Granel, bewildered, nodded understanding, sought to place a sentence: He had never meant to imply, he was sure that the captain would understand—

"I was chiefly to blame, Captain." Dubosq stepped forward gallantly.

"You—you—"

Vannoy stammered, his face white beneath the grime. An incredible expression of ferocity and hate contorted his face, his blue eyes shone wildly.

His fist, driven neatly, struck Dubosq on the jaw. The Legionnaire, caught flat-footed, reeled, went down. Granel saw that he was more startled than hurt or angry.

"Rise, rise," Vannoy begged.

Dubosq obeyed, and the captain struck him again. The Legionnaire fended him off with his uninjured hand, glanced appealingly at Granel, who took the hint and tried to step between them. The captain swung at him and knocked the képi from his head.

Upon which, Dubosq heaved a little sigh of resignation, dodged back two steps, resolved to save scandal and trou-

ble. Vannoy was driven by rage and despair, and by no means a weakling. But Dubosq struck him twice in the stomach with his good right hand, brought up his bent elbow sharply beneath his chin. Vannoy dropped.

For a moment, Dubosq looked down at him, licking his hand. Then he smiled faintly toward Granel.

"I'll say excitement isn't good for him! Reminds me of a hare gone mad, doesn't he? At that, we were wrong. He has guts, plenty of guts, even if he can't scrap."

He walked to the door, and the uninvited spectators scattered at his approach. Granel wetted a handkerchief, wiped the stunned man's face. Vannoy sat up, reeled to his feet. The sort of seizure to which he had been prey since surviving the attack on the *Kasbah* had ended.

"I behaved like a dreadful ass, didn't I?" he said, as if puzzled himself.

"Does a man good to let go, once in a while," Granel assured him. He produced a flat flask containing cognac from his hip-pocket: "This will buck you up, Captain."

"I was overheard, eh?"

"By those who should know what ailed you. All for the best."

"Also, I've been annoyed privately." Vannoy was brushing his knees, the seat of his breeches: "The Forestiers consider me a son-in-law. But I am not certain that Jeanne, well, you understand? I am very much in love with her." Vannoy said that as if he meant: "I'm fond of raisinpudding." "That letter to deliver worried me. Lingering romance and all that—plans upset at the last minute—"

"Why not ask Dubosq?" Granel suggested.

"Would you, like a good chap?"

Dubosq was squatted on the ground in a corner of the court-yard, one shoulder propped against a wall. He held the open letter and appeared unusually thoughtful.

"Well?" Granel asked.

"Nothing, I guess." Dubosq rose: "She informs me that her parents urge her to marry Vannoy, and that she intends to if she doesn't hear from me. Says she'll overlook what I did at Marinette's. Granel, that's pretty tepid, isn't it? And what would be the use? I can't make myself over. I couldn't make her happy, and I know I'd be miserable in a couple of weeks. It always has worked out that way with girls I knew. Feeling chained and finished, like a retired adjutant. Got a match?" He accepted the box, burned the letter carefully: "All right, let's comfort the other sap."

Vannoy had washed his hands, his face, had recovered his handkerchief. This gave him something to do with his restless, long fingers. Dubosq offered his hand.

"May I congratulate you, Captain? Mademoiselle Forestier has informed me of your coming wedding. Under the circumstances, there is no need for me to

write her. Will you tell her that I wish her well? And thank her for the letter?"

"Certainly. And I apologize for—"

"We mutually apologize," Dubosq cut him short humorously. "As we are no longer rivals, we can be friends."

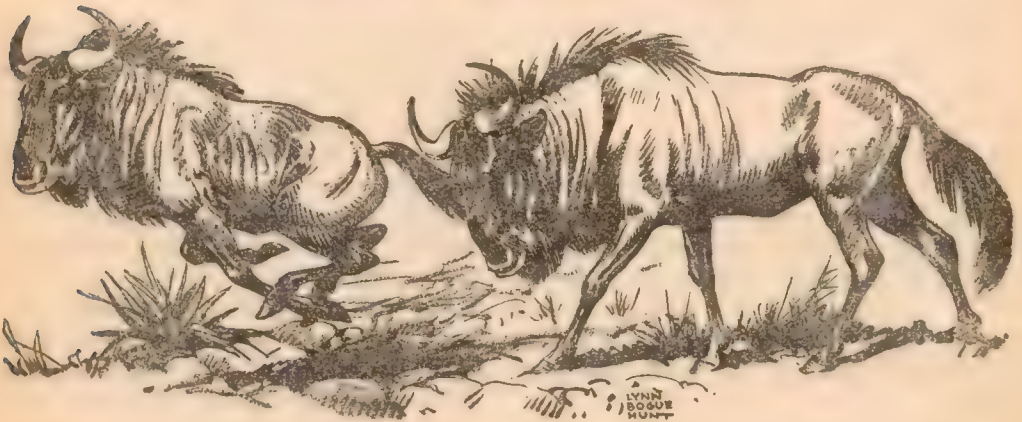
Vannoy bowed.

He left before night to join the staff. During the evening, Granel and Dubosq climbed on the terrace. On the dark slopes of the remote hills, new fires were lighted, which meant new foes, new combats, Morocco. Dubosq hummed the March of the Legion under his breath, and Granel believed him wrapped in dreams of glory and promotion, of conquest and war.

Suddenly, the Legionnaire was silent. And Granel waited for the remark he felt was coming. Renunciation, service, loyalty to the Corps, a number of fine sentiments would suit the solemn occasion.

"Granel—" There was a pause: "Do you think they'll live in Morocco after they're married?"

He Runs Hard, Fights Hard



THE Wildebeeste or Brindled Gnu roams east and central Africa, in enormous numbers in sections where man has not made serious inroads with his farms and ranches. It looks like a mixture of the horse, bison and antelope, but is a true antelope. It is a pugnacious creature. The males stage many duels, in which they go down on their fore "knees" and battle it out with their crumpled horns. This animal is very fast when alarmed, and goes at a tearing gallop.

—LYNN BOGUE HUNT



DISCIPLINE

A Short Novelette by Robert Carse

CHAPTER I

DISASTER

THEIR memory was dulled, their sensations those of shock and a fantastic, black confusion. All that they who remained could tell themselves during the first few hours after it had happened was that somehow they lived, were still with the ship, and that their comrades were gone, drowned, dead.

Old Frege, the boatswain, was the only man among them now who had been on deck when it occurred. He told them about it after a time, crouching a bit apart upon the slanted, dangerously low strakes of the keelsided ship. He reminded them that Michaelis, the chief officer, had had the deck and the com-

mand of the immense, high-sticked old bark when that single demoniac gust riding the heart of a rain squall had struck. Frege had been forward with the watch, near the fo'c'sle door. He had been nervous, he said, all during that watch. Because Michaelis, Baron Jean-Marie Frans Michaelis, had been carrying too much cloth. In fact, said Frege in his dull, dragged voice, Michaelis had been carrying every fancy rag the ship owned, royals and extra jibs, and had done so directly against the orders of the *Herr Kapitan Vandergolte*.

Frege stopped speaking when he said the captain's name. He sat still, his broad, bony knees hunched far up. Slowly, in the one gesture he ever allowed himself, he ran the palm of one hairy, tattooed hand up over the tanned crown of his squarely set and bald skull. He

looked at the others about him; he waited for them to speak. But they did not, they stared back at him, or at the sloped shoulder of the all but submerged and foundered ship, then out, where, in the black water over the wrecked tangle of masts, yards, canvas and cordage moved like luminous shadows the sharks who had got most of the other men from the ship.

Frege brought his hand down from his skull and dropped it loosely with a small smacking sound against the wet, tight dungaree cloth covering his knee.

"Discipline," he said in a slow voice to them around him. "Discipline was not maintained. Orders were not obeyed. I can tell you that now. *Herr Kapitan Vandergolte* is dead, and the *Herr Kapitan-Lieutenant Michaelis* is dead. But it was the *Kapitan-Lieutenant* who was at fault. He was carrying too much sail, far more sail than his orders left him in the watch-book called for."

Frege broke his voice off as he would break a piece of marline in his powerful hands. He leaned a little more forward, looking now directly at one man, young Klit Bornsen. It was as though all he had just said had been for Bornsen alone. Bornsen had been the senior cadet in the big officers' training ship. He had also been the intimate and close friend of Michaelis, came from the same small, wealthy land-owning clique as the dead chief officer back in the Baltic country.

Bornsen now, in his capacity as senior cadet, ranked next to Frege among the survivors. Perhaps, Bornsen thought now, that was why Frege spoke to him and looked at him like this, or more probably because this old, hard-bitten man who had not spent a solid month ashore in the last forty years resented all he and Michaelis had represented ashore, and bitterly resented what he stood for here, in this new and tragically strange situation.

He shifted his weight a bit under him,

feeling the burning ache through his shoulders and back where he had been pitched from his bunk in the half-deck in that awful moment of the death blow to the ship. He moved his shoulders and his arms around, so that he crouched in much the same position as a Japanese wrestler, fully facing Frege.

"Those are tough words, bosun," he said in his careful, clear voice. "Especially from a man like you, who knows no more about higher navigation than my left foot. It is true: the captain is dead, and Michaelis is dead. What good now to place blame? We're here, alive, and that's all. Now let's think of getting to hell and gone away from here before this hulk goes from under us."

Frege smiled shortly, showing his heavy, snuff-stained teeth flashing against the dark mat of his beard.

"What we do here," he said, "I will tell you, as I have always told you in this ship since you joined her. And she is not going to sink, not for some hours or some days, if I guess right. That is understood by you, and—" his small, blue, exceptionally bright eyes swung around at the others—"and you? Good! There was enough looseness and favoritism here before, just because men and officers happened to have friends and mutual interests ashore. Now, when an order is given, you all will jump to obey it. Else Frege will crack down upon you, and very quickly. . . ."

Beneath the deep tan of Bornsen's long-featured, sharply cut face a flush of thick color rose up along his brow to his hair line. He sat very still; made himself sit very still, although his hands involuntarily flexed tight upon his knee-caps. He drew his breath between his teeth, looking past Frege, seeing none of the others, and only the image of tall, gay Michaelis, the man who had formed completely for him, Klit Bornsen, all an officer, a gentleman and a friend could be. Then he laughed out loud, at Frege.

"That's it, hey? Frege, the old sour-

belly, the perfect bosun, finally gets command. You blacken a dead man's memory, and in the same breath you tell us you are going to crack down, if we do not do precisely what you say. Discipline—you heave that word out and fling it at us. So let me tell you discipline is a lot of bilge. We are all together here, and lucky to be together and alive. You are the oldest man, and perhaps the best sailor among us, and you were the bosun of this ship when there was reason for discipline. But, you were on deck when that squall hit the ship—and long before it struck. You could have gone aft, if you had wished, to the *Herr Kapitan*, and told him that, in your mind, Michaelis was carrying too much sail. But, no, you sat there on your after end and said nothing. You can tell us what you think should be done now, but you cannot order us—not me, anyhow. That, also, is understood, Frege?"

One of Frege's hands lifted half up, and out from his side, then fell again. Beside him, one of the young cadets, Jan Solaag, and a regular, paid sailor of the crew, Ludvig Groener, were harshly laughing in an instinctive release of hysteria. But they were silent as his eyes came upon them, and he gazed swiftly back at Bornsen.

"So?" he asked. "That is your answer, hey? But any of us here can know why that is. We can all remember your friendship with the *Herr Kapitan-Lieutenant*, and, yes, the time up in Haiti, in Port au Prince, when the last liberty boat had come back aboard, and you were not in it, but came out half an hour later in a bumboat, and shinnied up over the anchor cable and the bow. I caught you then, my smart cadet; all of us here can remember that. And I turned you in for being absent at quarters, although Solaag, here, had piped up and answered to your name in your absence.

"But, enough of that—now and for good. We have got a job to do here, and

one no sailor in his right mind would envy."



FREGE placed his thick fingers out beside him on the deck, gathered his feet and his weight under him, came nearly erect on the curved, set sheer of the shipside. He gazed at them, man by man, and carefully, as though newly and differently appraising their worth and clearly marking their abilities and potentialities in his brain. Then he looked along, forward, at what was left of the ship above the sea. Where they crouched was near the after end, almost at the beginning of the inward, and now downward, curve of the poop overhang. Forward, a few feet beyond midships, where the major weight of masts, yards and canvas centered dragging, the slow, slick South Atlantic swells rolled solidly over. The sea beyond was an infinity of the same softly turned swells, given limit only by the dim, first cream-yellow light of the dawn.

"We are perhaps eight hundred miles due East and a little South of Buenos Ayres," Frege said. "And we are far out of any ship lane, even that from Cape Horn. We are also caught in a series of currents that in time will take us south, into the ice. But we still have the ship, and, if I am right, there is food and water down below which we can get to if we are lucky and are sailors. We will not have to stay here long; let me tell you that now. Only a few days, a few weeks, at the most. The *Herr Kapitan* was in constant touch with other ships and South and North America by radio. We will be missed, by the absence of our radio calls, after a day or so, and then they will set out for us. We won't be hard to find. This ship has been over the same course five times before. I—" he gave them all a hard, cold grin—"have been over it three times before myself. I know this place pretty well. But now we must get food and water,

and axes if we can, to get rid of that running gear. Who can tell, maybe we can clear her enough to get down to the pumps, and right her? How would it be to come back up the Rio Plate in this one, after all this?"

"How about," said Klit Bornsen in a flat voice, "you telling us first how to get down to any part of the ship where there's still food and water, before we start on that?"

Frege's answer to him was a smile which was calm, easy, and in nowise mocking.

"Good," he said. He stood to his full height and his voice boomed. "Let's go! Turn to, you!" He jerked out a hand, pointing to Karl Dente, the fifth man there, and the youngest, smallest and lightest of the cadets. "You are the one to go in, and be first. We will make a human chain; I'll be anchor man. Then you," his glance struck across the flat-faced, stocky sailor, Groener, "next to me, Ludvig. Then Bornsen; then Solaag. You will all lie down flat, as far towards the inboard side as you can get. You will hang on to each other's ankles. You, Dente, crawl along there. Quick, man! We will lower you out over the poop overhang and toward one of the ports in the *Herr Kapitan's* cabin. You may find a port open there, or you may have to kick it in with your hands and elbows. But you must get in it, anyhow. And from there you must swim, or crawl. You know where the steward's pantry is, and the door to it, in the forward bulkhead of the *Herr Kapitan's* room? Good! Get going, then! I, for one, have an appetite."

Karl Dente had been one of the cadets just going on watch when the terrific force of the squall had struck. He wore his white, blue-collared jumper and bell-bottomed trousers, the round, white cap with the three black ribbons at the back which he had somehow miraculously kept in the blackness and terror of the ship's overturning. He took the

soggy cap off, turned it in his hands and looked at it, his round, bland face violently red with a blush of embarrassment.

"If I should not come back," he muttered, not staring directly at any of them, "you will see that my mother gets this?"

Frege cursed him, cursed him and then laughed at him.

"Get going!" he barked again. "If you do not shake it up, probably none of us will get back. Those side bulkheads are holding the sea out yet; I can tell that by the way this one rides and the position she keeps. But only God can guess how long they will stand up. Here, give me the stupid cap!"

But Klit Bornsen, crouched between him and Dente, reached out his hand first and grasped the cap, shoved it securely far down upon his dark-haired head.

"All right, Karl," he said in a soft, quick voice, reaching out to slap Dente smartly upon the back. "All the luck! Shove off now!"

They went one by one to their faces and stomachs along the rolled shoulder of the shipside. They grasped each other strongly by the ankles, spreading their feet and knees to keep from slipping down and into the sea. Little by little, squirming along, Frege at one end, Karl Dente, silent and quickly moving now at the other, they worked out on to the poop overhang. Then Dente called out, telling them to stop. "I can see the port light right below me," he said. "Just stay where you are; I can get down along the giltwork." He took one foot and then the other from the steadying grasp of the man right behind him, swung slowly around, bracing with his elbows, let his feet, his body and his head slide down from sight, only his hands, straining so tightly that the knuckles showed white, remaining within the others' vision. Then the right hand was quickly taken away, and the

left, and from below they could hear a dimmed, echoing shout.

"He's in!" Frege said. "Now we start. . . ."

They waited many minutes there for him, unable to tell in any way whether he lived and had found food and fresh water inside in that close, black, water-filled trap of the interior ship, or had been drowned as soon as he had disappeared from their sight. But in that time, without waiting for orders or a sign from Frege, Klit Bornsen hauled himself up to the stanchions of the taffrail, lowered himself down into the water and emerged with a fouled coil of signal halyard made fast at his belt.

"To get him out," he said, not to Frege, but to all of them. "And to bring aloft whatever he might have with him. Here he comes now; look! He never told me that he came from a family of acrobats."

Dente was emerging from the poop port-hole head foremost. He advanced one arm, and made a waving gesture.

"Pass down a line," he said in a strained, panting voice. "Or all your belts made fast together. I've got a little stuff here—all there is, and will be."

Bent on his knees, Bornsen swung the line end up, out and down and Dente caught it, brought it into him and out of their sight. Then his voice came up, in the call to heave away. Bornsen heaved away with a slow and delicate evenness of motion, while behind him Frege and the others caught their breath between their teeth. A small wooden keg was made fast to the end of the line, and they recognized it and its contents at once. It was a water keg the Captain had always kept freshly filled and stowed at the foot of his bunk in his cabin. It contained ten gallons of water, and, each man rapidly figured for himself, they were five here, and that supply of water would last them, at the utmost, two weeks, or three, in this place of fiercely blazing sun and sea.

But Klit Bornsen had the keg in his hands, was unbending the line hitches on it, swinging it forward into Frege's grasp.

"Hey, you, Karl!" he yelled down. "What's the rest of the prize?"

Dente was up against the port-hole, shoved both hands through, and they could see that there were lead-seamed biscuit tins in each one.

"All," he said. "Every damn' bit. I stayed underwater for God knows how long getting this. There is more, but it broke loose when she went over, and it's good for nothing now. Shall I come up, bosun?"

Frege said a curse word very softly. "Aye, come up. But pass that biscuit up first." He advanced aft, past Bornsen, took the line from his hands and swung it down, brought the two tins aloft, and then, flattening out, brought Dente up alone with a tremendous and magnificent sweep of his arms and back.

They gathered about Dente and slapped him on the shoulder and affectionately cursed him when he was up once more with them, but repeatedly their eyes came back to the two small biscuit tins and the keg of water between Frege's feet. Jan Solaag was the one who spoke out, staring levelly at Frege:

"You think that can hold us, bosun, until some craft raises us?"

Frege made a sound of hoarse laughter. "Sure. Why not? A biscuit a day to each man, and a swallow of water, at morning and at night. Like that, we're good for three weeks or a month, anyhow."

Solaag made no answer to him except to nod his head vaguely; he was looking at Bornsen. The tall, big-shouldered cadet had climbed again up the steeply sloped side to where the flat swells lapped. He was pointing down into the water, brightened and penetrated somewhat by the sharp sunlight now.

"The after boat, the gig, is still down

there, on the skids," he said, as though talking aloud to himself. "I can see her, and I think I can get down to her. She's got a water cask lashed under the thwarts, and water-proof beef and biscuit tins in the side lockers. A little of that chow, and maybe that boat, too, would help, hey?"

He smiled as he said that, but the expression of his face and eyes was sharp with tension, and he was already unbuckling his coir belt and slipping his jumper off over his head.

Frege moved then, a foot or so up toward him.

"Come down from there," he said. "Get back out of that! Those sharks would have you stripped to pennants before you were within fathoms of that boat. You hear me, cadet?"

"Yes," Bornsen softly said; he had his jumper and trousers off now, kicked out of his slippers, stood poised naked. "And to hell with you, and to hell with the sharks!" He had his long-bladed sheath knife in his hand; it flashed glinting in the sun as he lifted his hands in the first motions of his dive. The chuckled, rippling sounds of the small splash he made as he hit the water in his dive clashed with the cursed shout of Frege.



BUT they crawled up, even Frege, to watch him there. He had dived cleanly and deeply, was now dragging himself along through the tortured tangle of the crojick vangs, halyards and falls, kicking in, past and around them. Then, just as he reached out his hand to catch at the gunwale of the submerged boat, the first of the sharks came toward him. He turned to meet it, exactly as if he had been able to hear the harsh cries of warning from the men above. He kicked around and met it half over on his back, making the beast turn also, and come in a sort of sidewise, lunging dive at him. From that charge he flicked his body back and aside, and flicked the

long knife up, in. He held the knife quite stationary there; it was the pale-bellied shark that impaled itself upon it, ripped itself to death.

Bornsen came up then; with a scissoring kick, he sent himself towards the surface, while below him three sharks that had followed in after the first fought in savage attack and retreat for the possession of their blood-streaming fellow,

Bornsen laughed as he hoisted himself from handhold to handhold up to them on the shipside. He laughed more when Frege barked out at him and cursed him for a fool.

"No," he said when he had his breath fully back. "There's only one crazy donkey here among us, and you're the guy, bosun. I'll get all the food in that boat, and I'll get the boat itself before I'm through. So why not pipe down, and forget that you didn't think about doing it first?"

Frege made a motion with his hand to Groener, the sailor, commanding him to come and take hold of the water keg for him. Then, in a sort of crablike motion, his big, bare feet spread out along the tarred seams, he started towards Bornsen.

"It is about time," he said. "Yet, let me tell you now that I don't want to do this. But you must learn—and learn right now. Frege gives the orders here, and no man is going to do anything like that without Frege's orders. Just what would you do with that boat, even if I were to let you try to get it on the surface?"

Klit Bornsen slowly smiled; he hooked one thumb over his shoulder and pointed off into the western-board and toward the gleaming blue line of the horizon where, far beyond, lay the Argentine coast. "Shove off, and get back into the ship lanes; get back to the mainland. Instead of staying here, slowly starving to death and waiting for a ship or ships which probably will never come

for months, and then would not find us anyhow before we had drifted south in these currents right into the ice, there to freeze if we did not starve or go mad first. But that is not your idea, or your order, is it, bosun, so you do not like it. You can only see one thing—keeping us here, keeping command of this sinking hulk, and the only ship you'll ever skipper. That's bilge, bosun, and you know it. You're full of it right up to the neck. But what's your answer, now?"

Frege drew in his breath so swiftly that his wide nostrils fluttered. He swiped his hands in a mechanical motion down along the thighs of his trousers. Then in a slow, heavily pitched voice he said, "There are two answers. The first is that it would be impossible under any circumstances for you men to take a boat into the coast, or anywhere beyond fifty miles from here. Discipline is needed in a small boat voyage like that, and there is not enough real discipline among you to fill a sou'-wester hat. I am telling all of you that, and I am telling you, Klit Bornsen, right now that the second answer is—"

Bornsen had been watching the other's eyes, and the position of his hands and his body. He hit first, the boatswain's blow glancing off his shoulder, his own catching the older man right under the point of the bearded chin. Frege skidded around, and nearly down, and Bornsen jumped for him at once, attempting to pin him and hold him on the seamed planking. Frege met him with an up-lashing knee blow to the chest and a clipped swing of the right fist to the throat, sprang back and away, rose crouched up and came in.

But the taller, younger man was still on his feet, had the longer reach and, even through the daze of those two blows, the more sensitive and quicker reflexes. He hit Frege about the body and the mouth with both hands; he drove him around and almost into the sea, waited for him to come toward him again.

Frege came, steadily, very quietly. He drove his legs and his arms like pistons. He seemed impervious to any blows he had received; he seemed to operate for several moments then like a flawless and strange machine. He pounded Bornsen about the body and the head; three times caught him smacking blows on the crown of the skull as the other lunged in at him, trying to tackle and throw him in a wrestler's grip. Then, from the level of his tautened knee, Bornsen threw a long uppercut up. It crashed against the older man's gullet, rose in its final, full impact to the underside of the jaw. Frege whirled around, he stumbled, nearly fell, just caught himself. He turned crouching, one arm, the right, up over his face in a kind of shielding position, his left out in front and sweeping in vague, clumsy blows.

Bornsen laughed at him as he toiled up the slant of planks again. He went down in a direct, certain attack, knowing now that somehow he had the other man, had gotten to him, and had found victory. He hit Frege with perhaps a dozen other blows. He did not make the mistake of trying to close with him. He waited until Frege swayed stumbling up from where he had knocked him, and smacked him with long, lashing, chopping blows when he returned dully boring in with that curiously shielding right arm up over his face. And then, as the other teetered dazedly right before him, he made a rapid, two-handed grasp at Frege's stiffly outstretched left arm, hefted his weight and all his strength against it, pivoted back and around and flung the man banging down. Frege rolled over twice or three times; he attempted to lift himself up, and his arms and his knees gave under him, and he lay very still, panting with the thick, slow breaths of unconsciousness.

For a moment, Bornsen stood looking at him, trembling violently in the retreat of his anger and the relaxation of his nerves and muscles. He lifted his

bare arm and wiped the sweat and blood from his bruised, cut face. He gave his narrow-eyed glance to the other men, grouped closely a few feet away, their eyes lifting from Frege and to him. Groener, the swart, stocky sailor, laughed and spoke first.

"We eat now," he said. "And our friend," he jerked his head aside at Frege, "won't miss his rations now, or for quite a time. That was a handy job you did, cadet."

Bornsen came slowly walking over toward them, to stop before Groener.

"We eat," he told him, "when I tell you and the others to; not before. Grab on to that and don't lose it. That guy thought he was running this, but he's wrong. I am—and will. But he's still one of us, and any time any rations are broken out, he gets his full whack. Now, none of us are going to eat; we're going to see if we can free that gig and get it topside. If there's food and water in her, and it's still good, we'll have a bigger ration than we can get now out of the stuff Dente brought up. So let's get going, Groener; you, and all the rest. And if any of you—" his blue eyes, pale and hard now, swung across them again —"don't like what I tell you, or how I run this job, just speak up, and I'll bust down with some of what the bosun got. Come on! Turn to!"

CHAPTER II

THE KNIFE OF MUTINY



KLIT BORNSEN was slow in learning his lesson, but in many ways it was natural that should be so. He got the first part of it from the sharp-witted and nearly always sullen sailor, Groener, yet, oddly, it was young Jan Solaag who brought it about and in a direct sense terminated it.

For during all that day he drove them and himself mercilessly to the freeing of

the submerged gig. And, after their first immersions, unable to spare themselves any of their pitifully small and precious supply of fresh water, the combination of salt-soaked skins and sun began to trouble them increasingly. Their thirsts were tremendous, their lungs and bodies exhausted by repeated dives and periods of work at the foully snarled gear of the boat below. Their eyes were inflamed and half-blinded from working underwater, their skins already beginning to smart and blister. Brine caked white on their lips and faces, dried and flaked off constantly.

But he kept them at it, diving down and working in pairs—himself and Karl Dente, Groener and quick, laughing Jan Solaag. Below, one man kept a watch for sharks and helped when he could as his partner toiled with the small hatchet Bornsen had found in his second trip down at hacking loose the clog of falls, gripes and smashed running and standing rigging. And several times, during the early afternoon hours, while Frege still lay slumped in complete unconsciousness, Groener and Dente and even Solaag spoke of their growing need for fresh water.

"Free the boat," Bornsen told them in answer. "Get her out of there, or get the water casks out. Then we can all drink, and deep. But not before; we'll all work better, knowing we can't drink until we've got that. Come on, Karl; we'll try it once again."

It was while he was down below that time that Groener broached the water keg Dente had brought up from the Captain's cabin. Groener still held the bung halfway out from the cask when Bornsen and Dente broke the surface, gulping great breaths into their congested lungs, and swarmed painfully up to where the sailor and Jan Solaag rested.

Bornsen's glance went at once to the cask, and to the bung end held in Groener's thick fingers. Then he heard laughter, Groener's, and Jan Solaag's.

"Have a drink, mister," Groener said to him. "We've got a famous old kind of wine here—Chateau de la Pompe, and damn' good, too. Even a senior cadet can drink it without kicking. Try a snort."

Bornsen had in his right hand the hatchet he had been using to free the gig. He slid its lanyard from about his wrist, placed it carefully out of the way on the planking. Then he advanced to Groener.

"You've been drinking that," he asked, "when I told you none of us was going to touch it until after sundown?"

"Ja." Groener gave him his barked laugh. "Sure, I had a drink, a good, big one. I rate it; I was A. B. sailor in this ship, not a pimple-necked cadet who would never be going to sea if it wasn't for the fact his folks had a big lot of pull with the Minister of Marine back home. But don't glare at me, flap-ears; you're going to have a shock. Your handsome pal, there, Solaag, had a sock at the keg, too. He was the one to suggest the idea; he said he could fix it with you if you said anything."

Klit Bornsen turned slowly sidewise. To the west, the sun was an immensely flaming carmine whorl underneath a fleeced edge of small, distant wind cloud. Jan Solaag stood against that light, as if consciously he had positioned himself there, in the same manner as an actor at the point of pronouncing his crucial line.

"Oh, pipe down, Klit," he said before Bornsen could say a word. "You're taking yourself and all this show awfully damn' seriously. I don't like Frege any more than you, but part of what the old goat said this morning is true: a ship will be out looking after us within a week, and find us; they'll be able to check this current drift and our course. It's marked on all the charts."

"Yes?" Bornsen asked. He was trembling a little bit with controlled rage, and the knots of muscles at the corners

of his jaws were so contracted as to make the skin whiten there. "But still I told none of you to touch that cask, until tonight. And I warned you, if any of you did."

"Bilge!" Jan Solaag laughed as he spoke. "You'll think next you're wearing epaulettes and a staff saber. Cut it out, Klit. You told Frege yourself discipline and ship's ratings meant nothing here now. You and I, anyhow, have been in too many scrapes together, busted too many ship's rules, to kid around like this now."

Bornsen made no reply; he stood silent for several seconds. There was one thought, one echo now containing his brain: himself, standing here this morning, in essentially the same attitude and using essentially the same laughing, harshly taunting words to old Frege, Frege who had treasured his stripes and his silver boatswain's pipe more than anything else in the world, if only because of what they meant as discipline and what discipline should mean. Then behind him, and only a few feet away, he heard Ludvig Groener's voice. It was hoarse, slow, mocking:

"So you got no answer for him, your old regulation-busting pal, hey? Well, how about one for me, who had his A. B.'s ticket when you were still wearing bibs and had egg smeared on your chin?"

Bornsen turned quite gradually. He was strangely, softly smiling.

"You're asking for it," he said. "Here it is!" Then he struck, straight out from the right shoulder, the blow arced for the sailor's ducking face and head. But in the second that he struck he stared beyond, past Groener, and at Frege. The boatswain still rested prone on the deck, but Bornsen saw now that the man had returned fully to consciousness, was watching and had heard all this. And, for some reason that was in this moment far beyond his comprehension, Frege was motioning him on.



GROENER fought savagely, well, in the style of the fo'c's'le and the cheap waterfront grog shops, hitting with everything he had, knees, elbows, feet, thick skull and shoulders. He caromed swinging off from Bornsen's initial charge, and came lunging back, his hard-calloused heels smacking up for the cadet's groin, his elbow jabs and head butts seeking the other's throat. Bornsen had had little or no experience in that type of fighting, now was all but powerless and defeated before it, was slung around by a shocking shoulder blow to his jaw, tripped and went down, to save himself with a violent, desperate effort from getting immediately kicked into insensibility.

Rage rose in him, a white-hot, choking and maddening flame. He wanted one thing now, thought only of it—to catch Groener's throat with his hands, bend and toss the sailor backward, snap his spine, kill him in one supremely savage gesture as a dog might kill a vicious snake. But then through the roaring walls of the rage in his brain the sharp waves of pain brought by Groener's blows gave to him a cold kind of subtlety and sanity. He stopped his blind forward charge toward the sailor. He covered himself up with an astutely careful boxing position through which Groener was not yet willing to attempt to break, eager, instead, for him to charge. He studied Groener with clarity, with slow, cold logic.

Then a small smile came to his inflamed, battered eyes and lips. The other fought in that ferocious, vicious style naturally; he must have learned it in the gutters of the seaport town of his birth as soon as he could walk. But nearly always he had used it against men of his own kind, and seldom if ever against a man of Bornsen's type. That was why he was confident and content to wait now, believing absolutely that his style of attack and defense was superior and

practically flawless against Bornsen's conventional, gentlemanly fashion of boxing. Groener lacked the intelligence to know that this situation was tremendously primeval, could, already had, stripped the man before him of all superfluous sense of fighting ethics and conduct. He, Groener, would be perfectly content to kick his brains out, or maim him for life, but he would never think that the man before him now would use the same savagery.

Bornsen took a big and easy breath. Holding that same usual, formal boxing pose, he came towards Groener, as if dully, and fearfully aware that he was unable to find an opening in the other's style. He dropped his head down against his shoulder, and nearly brought his knees together, to protect his groin. He took a long, loose and utterly wasted left hook at Groener's head. It was what the sailor had been waiting for; he sprang in, his right foot lashing high, his fists whirling.

Bornsen swung no more than six inches aside from that charge. He matched kick for kick. His slamming, tensed foot caught Groener squarely in the chest, knocked the wind out of him, and sent him back, down, flatly on his shoulders and the base of his skull. He writhed and rolled there. He cursed in a pain-strangled voice.

"Get up," Bornsen told him. "Get up, you stupid dog, and draw the rest of your pay! You may have kicked several guys' guts in before, but I'm going to use your square skull for a football now! Come on—and take it, before I come and give it to you!"

Groener lay hunched on his side, staring up at him over his shielding shoulder. Then, with a feline sort of speed, he moved, springing to a position half off his knees a yard away from Bornsen, and between him and the place where he had dropped the hatchet the other had carried when he had came up from his work on the gig. In Groener's

right hand, slid out from his belt sheath and held flatly, was his keen, straight-ended knife. He held it with his thumb across the blade just above the hilt, its weight balanced against the palm of his hand in the throwing position of an expert.

"And have you," he asked, "smack my ears in with a dozen blows as you did old scuttle-butt, this morning? No, *poco hombre*, not a bit of that. Now you come and get it! Come on—before I count five, and let this sweet news in through your ribs!"

Bornsen stood absolutely still and silent; they all stood still there. And then, in a loud, hoarse voice, grinning widely, Groener began to count, his thick lips pulled back from his teeth. He had counted three before any of them moved. Then it was old Frege, the boatswain. He made a shuffling, scrambling sort of dive up the side planks and right past the whirling sailor, grasped the hatchet lying behind. He had it part way up in a protecting, throwing motion against the lashing sweep of Groener's knife when Bornsen jumped the sailor from behind, hammered him down to the planks, rolled him over in a strangling, mastering full nelson hold.

He took the knife away from Groener, flung it down the shipside. He hooked jerked and cracking punches to the sailor's jaw and throat until the strength and ferocity ebbed out of the man and he lay weakly, muttering words of protest and entreaty. Bornsen hit him once more, a slapped blow with his open hand. Then he got up from him and went in a swift leaping dive towards Frege. But the boatswain had released the hatchet, sat quietly on the planks, his empty hands before him. "I don't know why you did it," Bornsen said harshly to him, grasping up the hatchet, "but thanks anyhow." Then he turned back to Groener. "Get up!" he said. "Lay over there!" He kicked him up. "Stay there until I tell you to move, you alley rat!"

He moved on down, past him, not bothering to keep his eyes upon him. He picked up Groener's knife. He struck the blade of it a blow with the hatchet, breaking the end off an inch beyond the point. Then he slung it back at Groener's feet.

"Keep it," he said. "But the next time you try to use it, see that it's down below, working on the gig. If you try an act up here again with it, I'll scalp you, with this hatchet. And I never scalped a donkey before; I'd probably do an ugly job. Get me?"

His level, hot gaze reached to Jan Solaag and to small, round-eyed Karl Dente.

"All right, Karl," he said. "Go over and draw your ration of water, and you too, Frege. Go ahead, I'll be right with you as soon as I've opened one of these biscuit tins. We all rate a biscuit a piece tonight, but those two smart bananas are going to eat theirs dry; they drew their water rations, a little while back."



A WHITE and small moon rose up over the sea through the coldly patterned blue-white points of the constellations several hours after they had eaten. Karl Dente already lay hunched in a position of vast exhaustion and sleep, his tightly rolled cadet's cap under his head as pillow. Jan Solaag and Groener also lay in postures of slumber, their eyes shut, their breathing slowly regular; Bornsen and Frege were the only ones to sit erect.

They sat quite near together, and more than half facing each other. The boatswain had saved out a bit of his big pilot biscuit, soaked in water, and was now gradually finishing it. Bornsen watched him as he ate, noticing the man only used one hand, his left, in all his movements. And then he saw that the other hand, the right, lay in a position of odd clumsiness or pain out along the planks. The comprehension formed

gradually in Bornsen's brain; he had first to think back through all the maze of the violent events of the day until his fight of this morning with the boatswain. But then, at once, he spoke:

"What's the matter with your right hand there, Frege?"

The boatswain lifted his head a little. He stared at the younger man from under his bushed, grayish eyebrows, in the same instant mechanically brushing the last of the biscuit crumbs out of his mustache and beard.

"Broken," he said then, evenly. "I broke it on your hard young skull this morning; snapped one of the small bones in the wrist. I wouldn't tell you that, if it wasn't that you're the first man to whip me in twenty years, and I want you to know why. I don't want you having any false ideas about me, cadet."

Bornsen let two or three answers form and pass in his brain before he spoke; he listened to the quiet sea working at the remaining bulkheads and air space of the ship, the faintly repeated rumors of the swells across the hull forward and the dim, uneven shock and chafing of the fouled masts, yards and gear underwater.

"Yet," he said at last, "you helped me with that swab, Groener. You kept him from getting the upper hand here, and perhaps a damn' sight more than that—from slapping his knife right through me."

Frege made him a slight nodding motion. "That's right. Groener is a bad number; a stupid slug who's always done his work on the sea only when he's been kicked into it. You might be stupid, but you aren't as stupid as that."

"Thanks." Bornsen was staring through narrowed eyelids. "But you let me keep the hatchet; I had the upper hand on Groener, once you took his eyes off me and grabbed the thing yourself."

"You wouldn't have kept that upper hand—and you won't keep it—without the hatchet. Groener's just dull enough

to come back for more, sooner or later. And those other two lads aren't anything to rate extraordinary discharges; Solaag's a damn' fool, too. Remember how he jumped at the water cask when you were down below. And that Dente is just a good-natured kid; he'll follow whoever's the leader, or whoever can make him think he's the leader. And I haven't got the strength to knock you guys around. This arm is really giving me a lot of hell."

Bornsen whispered a swear word nearly soundlessly. "All right," he said. "Swap about. I don't get much of this, but I get enough to know that while I'm running this show I'd better see that a man like you gets fixed up. Wait a minute, and I'll fashion out a splint for you; a couple of pieces of wood from the taffrail there, some of that signal halyard and a hunk from my shirt will do it. But, do you think there's any inflammation there now?"

"Enough," Frege told him. "If you'll hold the arm for me, I'll open it up with my knife. That stuff will be better out than in." He held forth the injured arm quietly and Bornsen grasped it, and then watched in a sort of fascination of horror as Frege took his big sheath knife and with calmness, quickly, made the necessary incision in the inflamed part.

"All right," he said, his rapid breathing up against the word as the only sign of any pain he felt, "go and fix your splint. How's your shirt, clean?"

"As clean as it will ever be." Bornsen spoke with some difficulty, forcing himself to look down upon the bleeding, motionless arm. "Here!" With the knife, he slashed a long strip of his cotton shirt tail away, handed it over to the other man. "You can start putting that on while I go and rig the splint."

He did the splint work clumsily under the steady, quiet gaze of Frege's eyes, exhaled a deep breath of relief when it was finished.

"All right now?" he asked.

"Sure," Frege told him. "Why not? Go and get your shuteye now; don't worry about me. Don't forget about your hatchet, though; take it with you. You'll need it, sooner or later, here or down below. Are you going back on that job of freeing the gig in the morning?"

"Nothing else but!" Bornsen snapped back at him, his voice rough with a sudden anger. "That's the only way you, or I, any of us, will ever get out of here."

"You're boss now," Frege answered him. "Go ahead. Good night, cadet, and good luck; that's a tough job you got."

"Nothing," said Bornsen rapidly, "as tough as the one you wanted to start us on this morning. Good night, yourself!"

CHAPTER III

COMMAND



THEY were five days more getting the gig away from the mazed grasp of its own gripes, lashings and falls and up through the constant danger and confusion of the mess of wrecked ship's gear all around and above it. All four of them, Bornsen, Dente, Groener and Solaag, worked hard at that, but it was Klit Bornsen who directed and planned it, carried the major part of the work, the danger and the repeated counter-attacks against marauding sharks. And at the end of the fifth day, when the white-painted, daintily lined little boat at last broke the surface as they gently heaved her up along the lines they had rigged, he was aware that almost all his reserves of energy, command and courage were gone from him.

The gig was of wooden construction and of the clinker-built type. Now she was little more than a sorry wreck. Her bow was sprung where some heavy weight had struck her in the careening of the ship, the planks splayed back away from the cutwater. The drainage plug was missing from her bottom, sev-

eral of the bottom boards were stove through, and three of the rowlocks, two of the oars and the rudder and all the rudder gear were gone. The only real prize they had gained in salving her was the added supply of fresh water, biscuit and preserved beef which had been secured in hermetic tins under the thwarts: those were still intact.

Bornsen was so weary he stood erect before the boat only by an ultimate exertion of the will. They had brought it up against the taffrail, lashed it there with some of its own fall and davit lines. He stared at it for a long moment, his head lowered forward, then at the three men who had worked with him, last, behind, at Frege. But Frege was expressionless, sat immobile; it was, thought Bornsen, as though this craft they had toiled so hard to bring to the surface meant less than nothing to that man, and if it meant anything at all, it was as a wry joke—a joke upon him, Bornsen.

A spurt of his old, flaming rage rose in him, brought him straightening up, and gave force to his voice and movements.

"All right!" he barked at the three men near him. "What the hell are you waiting and gaping for? We've won the toughest part of the battle, haven't we? Get up in there, Karl, and pass down those tins to Groener and Jan. There's the chow and water I promised you. Tomorrow, after we've had a crack at some of that, we'll get to work fixing the boat. We ought to have that done and be bound west out of here for the ship lanes or the coast in another week. You hear me? Snap it up!"

They looked at him as he spoke, and Karl Dente and Solaag smiled slightly as some of the excitement and force in the timbre of his voice reached to them. But after he was through, their faces and eyes sobered instantly, and they looked blankly at the boat, afterward, briefly around at Frege, the man from whom both of them had learned the basis of

their seamanship. It was Bornsen's great temptation to curse out at them, or strike at them, but some inner, instinctive information, a conviction that had been growing within him during the last three or four days restrained him from it.

Frege, he said silently now as he forced himself to stand here and watch them slowly and desultorily climb up into the boat and go to work obeying his command, Frege was the man for him to watch now, and not any of the others. Curiously, and most gradually, a new, far more grave battle of wills and of personalities was developing between him and the boatswain; had started in reality that night after his fight with Groener. On Frege's part, and his own, so far, it was yet only a battle of indirect attack and silence. But Frege had entered a wedge between him and his command of these men and the situation here; Frege was actually fighting him right now. And Frege's best weapon was one he himself had presented him: not since that first day had he given the man a command to obey, and, even in the last three or four days, since the boatswain's arm had been better so that he could do some slight work at least, had he made any indication that he was willing to work or help here.

The small knots of muscles hardened and enlarged at the corners of Bornsen's jaws. He turned around and looked squarely at the bosun. To his sharp surprise, Frege nodded and smiled at him, and said softly:

"You're getting what you wanted now, cadet?"

"Yes," he answered slowly. "A little of it." The rage was again darkly aflame in him, and now he made no attempt to hold it back. He still held the upper hand—the hatchet hand—here, he thought swiftly, and would hold it until he was willing to relinquish it. This man, Frege, or any or all of them in combination lacked the power to take it from

him, and he might as well let Frege know it now:

"But there's only two more things I want. One, the first, is to see you bending on an oar in that boat when we start back in it for the Argentine. The other is, about six months from now, when we've been back home for a time, and I've got my officer's papers, you coming to salute and saying 'yes, sir!' when I heave along the deck. 'Discipline' is a swell word, Frege; I'll make you want to eat it before I'm through."

"Yes, sir," Frege said, but did not smile, just sat there, motionless, and very calm. It was Groener behind him, Bornsen, who laughed.

"Fine, my smart bosun friend!" Bornsen said. His voice was almost indistinguishable with rage. "That's enough out of you. Now, you come over here and turn to—make up on the rations you've tucked away!"



THEY were longer than Bornsen's week in getting the boat repaired; it was over ten and a half days, even with Frege's expert and unflagging help, before the boat was in anything remotely resembling waterworthy condition. When it was done, Bornsen ordered them away, the hatchet swinging on its lanyard from his wrist, his red-rimmed eyes blinking in a smouldering of anger that had been perpetual with him during the last week.

"Let it be," he told them. "That's all we can do to it now, and all any man could do. What's left is to sail it out of here tomorrow morning toward—" he paused significantly—"one of those ships Frege promised us long ago would be out here 'almost at once' for us."

Frege was moving back with the others toward the little sort of canvas and spar end shelter they had rigged to keep them out of the sun and weather; he gave him a long, slow, blank glance.

"Why kid me any longer?" he asked.

"You've proved me wrong all along, haven't you?"

"You were wrong before you started," Bornsen said, dragging the words up through his weariness. "Pipe down; save that wind for a little work on an oar tomorrow."

He went aside alone then, preferring the open deck and the reflected, painful dazzle of the sunshine off the sea to any shelter he might share with them under the crude, hunched shelter of canvas. He sat motionless there for hours, through the rest of the afternoon and the early hours of the darkness and evening, knowing and understanding his weariness of body, brain and nerves, and fighting against it.

He had Dente bring him his supper there, a half sea biscuit, a small, crumbled pinch of partly rancid beef, and about a gill of water, measured out in a tin cup Dente had found in another trip of exploration down into the captain's cabin. The others, before his eyes, had drawn and consumed equally the same rations, then retired back into the shelter. He watched the open side of it for some time, waiting for some sign or sound of action from within, but there was none, and finally, not at all aware that he was doing so, he slowly and by delicate, uncounted degrees slid into sleep, sitting upright and stiffly, the hatchet with its lanyard around his wrist propped upon one knee.

It was the sound of the hatchet and of rending, smashing wood which awakened him. He started to his feet, staggering and reaching mechanically for the hatchet, then for his knife. The hatchet and the knife both were gone. Then he saw Frege. Frege was out against the taffrail along the poop overhang. He had the hatchet in his hands; with it, he was systematically staving through the sides and bottom of the gig.

Bornsen ran sliding and yelling towards him before Frege stopped and turned. Then he came down to the com-

parative width and levelness of the ship-side, the hatchet still half-lifted in his hand.

"The boat," Bornsen yelled thickly at him. "What the hell are you doing to the boat, man? Are you mad?"

Frege set his bare feet wide than shook his head at him.

"No," he said. "You're the only guy that's at all mad around here. Pipe down; listen to me! I'm top hand here now. I—" he allowed himself to smile a little bit—"I've got the hatchet, and you also seem to have given me your knife. Don't jump at me now; don't say a word. I won't beat you up, as you beat up me and Groener. I'll just smack your brains in with this. On the job I want done and that's going to be started here tomorrow morning, one more man won't mean one hell of a lot, and one man's absence will mean more chow and water all around. So go back there and finish your shut-eye, cadet. When and if you get back home and get your officer's papers, I'll call you 'sir' and jump to it when you give an order. But, not now. I'm skipper here, and from now on. And tomorrow morning, at daylight, we'll start on the job I want done: clearing that foul tangle of masts and gear away from her, so she'll right herself a little bit, and we can get to the pumps and shove some of this water out of her, relieve the strain on those bulkheads, *Savvy?* Shove along, then! Because we're late now; we've spent two weeks at this child's play of yours."

Bornsen stood unmoving for an instant, shrewdly holding back rage and dismay, gauging the other man and every possibility of attack and victory. Then, without word, he turned, and moved away, Frege moving more slowly behind him. Frege was right, he told himself, forming the bitter, silent words clearly; Frege would kill him now, beat him down with the hatchet if he started one false move. Frege was the boss here



now. He was the skipper—the man who held the hatchet and command.

For Bornsen those next days were quite unreal. He worked with the others, Groener, Solaag, Dente and Frege, at the work the boatswain laid out and directed to the last detail, but the only reality in all of it for him was the kind of desperate quietness of his waiting while he constantly tensed his nerves and muscles to grasp back command from the big, bearded man into his own hands again. He contrived never to take his eyes or his thoughts from Frege; he passed several solid days and nights without sleep, remembering just how Frege had tricked him and hoping to repeat the ruse on the other man. But that he found was impossible: Frege's powers of endurance were as great if not incalculably more so than his own. Frege was always awake;

Frege was always waiting and ready for him. Frege had him, had mastered him, and now, moment by moment, hating himself terribly for the admission, he realized it.

They had cleared the wrecked weight of the main and mizzen masts away, brought the ship back toward an even keel enough so that they could scramble in through the poop ports and reach the hand-pump system in the after hold, before Frege would let any of them stop work for more than two hours at a time. And all of them, the entire five, had returned to the hold and the long, rusted iron pump-handles at the dawn of their nineteenth day alone in the ship when they heard the muffled and far away sounds of the whistle.

They stopped pumping, one by one. They looked at each other, and up;

toward the deckhand and the solidly jammed hatchboards above. They were afraid to speak, afraid to move, held in a lock of hope and of fear that was too great yet for any other emotion to enter in and drive them to action. Then little Karl Dente opened his mouth soundlessly, lifted his hands from the round metal of the pump handle where he stood beside Frege, and fell forward unconscious on his face into the dirty, knee-deep water.

Frege was the one who picked him up and brought him on deck; the others had already broken and gone. They stood grouped on the slanting poop, hanging on to the wheel-housing, when he reached there with Dente murmuring in his arms. The other ship was still a mile or so away from them. It was a steamer, with a high, old-fashioned red stack. The Argentinian ensign was at the main gaff, the naval ensign of their own country at the fore-truck. On the bridge, they could see men in white, gold-laced uniforms.

"It's it," said Jan Solaag. He said the words in a kind of vague, breathless whisper, like a man speaking out of the vagaries of a fever. "It's it. By God, look! It's a ship! They've come—for us!"

They were silent then, for a long time, standing there and looking. The ship was coming nearer; signal hoists were being broken out and sent up on her halyards.

"Go answer them," Frege said. He spoke to Groener and to Dente and Jan Solaag. "You three, go. Take some of that canvas from the shelter and make signal flags. You, Solaag, know the semaphore; you can answer them."

Bornsen started to move after them untold, but Frege leaned out, and tapped him lightly on the shoulder.

"Wait," Frege said. "Wait, Klit; I want to talk to you." He had not lifted his hand from the younger man's shoul-

der. "Because we are going back now, and probably none of us will ever work or ride in this ship again."

"Yes," Bornsen said. He stood very close to the tall, gray-bearded man. "You're right, about that ship, and this ship, and us. But, I've only got one question. That day, the first day, when you broke your hand against my head, and I beat you, you got possession of that hatchet; you knew what I wanted to do, and was going to do when I got command. But still you let me have it. Why was that?"

Frege smiled, as though at a joke he had not remembered for a very long time. "There is only one answer to that," he said. "You and I had to fight, and we fought, and I broke my hand, and you won. But I gave you the hatchet, I gave you command, because I knew that also in that way you, and the others would learn discipline; you would have to learn it yourself, and give the same lesson in it to Groener, and to the others. Otherwise, if you did not, you would have gone on with that idea of the boat always in the back of your mind. But you would have never got far in that boat, as I once told you, without discipline, and the boat itself would never have taken you far, even if you had killed me. So I let you take over my job, and teach yourself and them the thing you all lacked—discipline. Remember, it was not so long ago now, you said to me that discipline was a swell word. You think that still, now this is over, and that ship is out there to take us, and this ship, back home?"

The laughter welled from deep within Bornsen.

"Why not?" he asked. "In a few years now, if I stick along with it, I should be a sailor."

"No." Frege shook his head at him, his left hand up to tug lightly at his beard, his right out to meet Bornsen's hand. "You're a sailor now."

ROUGH HANDLING



By William Edward Hayes

ENGINEMAN ORLANDO DICKERSON drew himself up in the awesome presence of those mighty men on the other side of the gleaming table. He was sitting far forward on the straight and uncomfortable chair reserved for guests such as he. He was poised as if a shaker bar had been run down the back of his faded blue serge coat to keep him from sagging in the middle.

There was the suggestion of soot in the stiff lashes that ringed the round blue eyes, but the thin, bronzed face was scrubbed until it shone. The eyes, with

a shadow of fear behind their wistfulness, traveled from one to the other of the stern triumvirate. Two of those faces were familiar. Bolling, the superintendent, and Pendergast, the master mechanic. The third was suddenly turned to him. A sharp face surmounted by a thin, high-bridged nose. Eyes that looked through him and caused a red flush to burn on his cheeks.

The lips in the thin face were moving. Words fell from them. Engineman Dickerson heard them, realized they were addressed to him.

"Eighteen years," the man said. His

name was Sutter. He repeated, "Eighteen years." He paused, searching Dickerson's open countenance.

Dickerson wet his lips. What of it? He wanted to cry out, "What of it?" There was something inhuman about the way this Sutter regarded him.

"A man," Sutter went on, "ought to learn how to handle a train in that length of time." He shook his head from side to side. He consulted a paper on the table before him.

Dickerson knew what the paper was. A summary of the record of the engineer. His record. Not too lovely to look at. He knew that, too.

Sutter said, "This isn't the first time this man's been up for rough handling." He turned to Superintendent Bolling who cleared his throat uncomfortably.

Bolling said, "No. Not the first time. Of course there were circumstances. . . ."

Dickerson watched the division boss when he broke off. Bolling was all right. Bolling was a good guy. Hard as nails, he could cuss you out in one breath for a breach of main-line rules and borrow a chew of tobacco in the next. Bolling had been through the mill. Old-time freight conductor. He knew what a main-line man was up against. Not like this Sutter. Young squirt with the new title of efficiency engineer. Where was railroading heading to?

"Circumstances!" There was a mean emphasis on that. Sutter's lips sort of snapped when he closed them over the word. "There are always circumstances."

Was that a sneer, now? Dickerson's palms were wet. Eighteen years. Yes, he'd been stepping 'em through the dew for eighteen years.

"Rough handling," Sutter said thinly. His jaw seemed to protrude. He fixed Dickerson with his stare. "You're aware, Dickerson, of the campaign this railroad's putting on to increase passenger traffic? You probably don't know about it. Men of your stamp wouldn't. You—"

"If you mean," Dickerson broke in sharply, "the ballyhoo in the magazines, about how a passenger has to look out the window to see if the train's actually standin' still on account of the engineers bein' so careful an' all—"

"I resent that word ballyhoo, Dickerson. And remember, you're addressing an officer of the company." Sutter's mouth hardened.

"An'," Dickerson cut in, "I happen to be one of the engineers."

Superintendent Bolling cleared his throat. Pendergast, the mechanical officer, shifted in his swivel and pulled at his second chin.

"You happen to be an engineman," Sutter retorted, "who doesn't know the first thing about handling a passenger train. The record shows you've been qualified for passenger operation for five years."

"I have."

"One ride over this division behind you yesterday, Dickerson, convinces me that your place is with freight—drag freight. I watched particularly every stop and start you made. And with a Pullman train, too. I watched you jerk and jolt—"

"I had fourteen steel cars and a wet rail," Dickerson broke in defensively. "An' an engine that should'a' had only ten cars. You hook up to a load like that an' see what happens."

Yesterday's run was all too fresh in Dickerson's mind. Loaded. When you've got an engine loaded and you can't get the drivers over without taking up the slack you're bound to shake 'em up in the Pullman seats.

"Poor alibi," Sutton said. "I've checked on that. I've checked on other things. I've checked enough to know, Dickerson, that you're a mauler. You can do more damage to an engine from one terminal to another than any other engineman here. You can jerk the eye-teeth out of a man's head the way you get 'em under way, and you can just

about set 'em down in the aisle the way you stop."

"But, I tell you," Dickerson protested, the red diffusing over his face, "when you don't have the right engine for a given tonnage, or when the efficiency experts load too many cars—"

"Your train yesterday was under the tonnage rating of your engine," Sutter snapped. "Here it is on paper. Here is your master mechanic to attest to it."

"Paper," Dickerson half shouted. "What you got on paper an' what you got on two rails—"

"I'm doing the talking," Sutter snapped. "You do the listening. My orders are from the general manager. My orders are to weed out the maulers from passenger handling. This railroad lives up to what it advertises. If its enginememen can't get into the spirit of co-operation in the battle of competition —" He concluded with an eloquent lifting of his thin shoulders.

Dickerson attempted to swallow through a tight, dry throat. Why didn't Pendergast speak up? Why didn't Bolling say something? They were old-timers. They knew. Or did they know? Did they remember their own days on the steel? Why didn't they explain those things on the written record? They knew that the several instances noted there, and the resultant discipline set down, weren't as bad as typewritten words on paper made 'em look.

Sure he had a record. What engineer hadn't? What engineer hadn't, a time or two in his running, been guilty of a misplay, a bit of faulty judgment? Take a little thing—a thing that could happen to anybody—and write it in the record, and put down beside it, "Discipline, ten days without pay," and it isn't going to look pretty if somebody wants to make something of it.

Eighteen years. You can do a lot of engine running in that time, and you can get into scrapes. Dickerson had gotten into them eight or ten times, and had

been disciplined. So many days off without pay. So many reprimands. But had he, Orlando Dickerson, ever so much as damaged one dollar's worth of company property by sheer negligence of duty? Had he ever so much as slightly injured an employe or a patron of the railroad? Never. Yet here he had to sit and take this Sutter's—

But Sutter was speaking again, and his words fell harshly. Sutter was saying, "Gentlemen, I've made my report to the general manager's office. According to the instructions I've had, I'm recommending this man's disqualification for passenger service until such time as both of you are thoroughly convinced he can handle air brakes efficiently—"

"But you can't—" Dickerson spoke before he realized it, and as suddenly clamped his lips shut.

You couldn't take a man out of passenger service that way when he'd worked so hard these years to reach that goal. You couldn't just put a man back on freight that way, especially when he had a reputation as a runner who could make the time on the tight schedules and run the fancy varnish with the precision of a hoghead's watch. You couldn't—

"And when you're convinced, and I'm convinced," Sutter was continuing, "that Engineman Dickerson can do something with a brake valve besides shaking the insides out of passengers, his reinstatement will be considered. Until then—"

Mr. Sutter stood up. Dickerson rose. He glared at Bolling and Pendergast. They didn't meet his hot eyes. Old-timers. They could have said something. They could have put in a word.

Dickerson went to the door. His old black felt hat was crushed between his long fingers. There was a stoop, now, to his shoulders. Eighteen years. Freight. Drag freight.

"When you can do something with a

brake valve besides shaking the insides out of passengers—"

He found himself in the hall. It was going to be swell to face the stares of the others across the tracks at the roundhouse. Feeling, rather than hearing the whispers.

"Dickerson. He set 'em in the aisles on passenger. He handled the air brake with his feet. They got him on the tonnage stuff."

They'd say that. The others. And the thought of it cut him because he had been a runner. A hot-shot runner. He had turned 'em over on the high iron at a hundred miles an hour. And in his air brake examinations he had scored a hundred per cent. But had Sutter looked at that?

He stood in the hall and glared back. A sound came to him. A whistle, a deep chime, roaring twice. No. 3, the Sundown Mail, was leaving town. His right palm itched and his fist closed. In two hours the caller would be out for the crew to point the nose of No. 21 at the westward rise. The caller would get somebody else for the right-hand side. Twenty-one would clatter over the switchpoints and tunnel the night with her headlight, but Dickerson would not be there to jerk the whistle lever.

Freight. Drag freight.



MASTER MECHANIC
PENDERGAST filled the roundhouse foreman's chair in the grimy cell of an office

and the ear against which the rubber cylinder of the telephone receiver was pressed was a purplish red.

Pendergast moved his lips three times as if trying to say something to the ear at the other end of the wire. But the voice that was pouring into his ear wouldn't give him a break. It was Superintendent Bolling's voice and it was not only voluble but vitriolic.

"If it ain't a lovely picture," Mr. Bolling was roaring, "then I'd like to

see one. The railroad running over with efficiency experts who tell us we can't do that, or we have to do this, until I'm so balled up I don't know whether I'm going east or west. Couple to that an increase in passenger, mail and express traffic, and then subtract a few crack runners pulled off the board like Orlie Dickerson was pulled off, and you can see why I'm nuts. Did you look at the engines called for the west-bound jam tonight? Did you look, I ask you? Don't tell me. Maybe you did and didn't like what you saw. But anyhow—"

"Hold it! Red board!" Pendergast bellowed into the phone. He sucked in his breath. "Let me talk while you breathe. Yes, by hell, I looked. That's what I'm doin' at the roundhouse. An' I don't like a damn thing over here. First there's an extra freight called for eight-thirty, an' another for nine. So much for that. That don't worry me like the twenty-ones. Two sections. First twenty-one at 8:40. Fifteen steel cars. Big engine. I got to have a big engine. Well, by hell, I got it. An' I got the crew. Second twenty-one at 8:55. Twelve cars. They want a big engine. All right. I can get that, too. But what the hell am I gonna use for an engineer?"

"Wait, Al," Mr. Bolling choked. "Don't tell me you've got no passenger engineer with his rest up and qualified—"

"That's what I *am* tellin' you," Mr. Pendergast retorted. "I've got no passenger engineer, and I won't have one, and the second twenty-one can stay here all night for all I give a good healthy hoot. I ain't had a decent night's sleep in the week that's passed since your friend Sutter swooped down on us, an' I'm just about ready for a cell with a lot of bed-tickin' padded around it."

"Wait over there until I can come over," Mr. Bolling yelled. "If we can't figure out something I'll go to the State Hospital with you."

On the outbound spur, six car lengths

beyond the roundhouse office door, a yellow torch flared against the pressing darkness and sent its licking flame up under the running board of a ponderous locomotive boiler.

A stooped giant with a thin face and round blue eyes was dwarfed by the driving rod and wheel against which he stood as he tilted his long-spouted oil-can and nosed it into a hole. Above him the air compressor sighed, and steam blubbed against the pop valves at the dome. The draft forced by the blower valve hissed through the stack and the smoke swirled up where a gusty wind scattered it.

Out of the shadows another man came, another giant with broad shoulders.

"How many cars?" the fireman queried, and Dickerson took the spout of the can and wiped it off with a ball of cotton waste.

He turned slowly to face his fireman, who wore goggles shoved up on his brow.

Dickerson said, "Tonnage. A hundred and thirty. Mostly loads. Coal, pig iron, and lumber. With traffic like it is we'll be lucky if we get over the pike in twelve hours."

He turned back to his oiling. The fireman went on to the deck and climbed up into the cab. Dickerson, presently, heard the scoop banging against the door rim. The fireman would be getting ready.

He passed around beneath the headlight to the other side. All about him were the familiar noises. Engines popped, or whispered. The coal smoke smell bit his nostrils. The old familiar smells. Eighteen years of it.

He counted back, as he had counted back each day of this long, frightful week in drag freight service. Five years since he had hossed over a mike, as they called the big Mikado class locomotives, and heard the rumble of slack running out of a hundred cars. His mouth became grim, his lips a tight, relentless line.

Only that morning he had heard a pas-

senger conductor telling about a man on the Dakota Division who'd been disqualified for rough handling, and put back on freight, and seemed doomed to stay there.

"These efficiency engineers," the passenger conductor had said, "they get it in for a guy. Like you talking back to that one, Orkie. You shouldn't a' talked back because it's Sutter that has to qualify you again, and he's hard. He's steel itself. The man on the Dakota Division. They say he probably won't ever get back an' there's no way goin' over the efficiency man's head. No way a-tall."

Cheerful outlook. He glared up at the giant engine. This hog. He spat upon it. Pull. Pull the very vitals out of hell, but she couldn't run. She wasn't built for running. Oh, fifty or so. Without a train you might run her up to sixty per, but she'd roll her wheels out from under her if you tried to force her. And the way they were loading cars on you. Tonnage!

Dickerson saw Sutter in his mind's eye. It was a vivid and unwelcome picture. "So," he said to himself, "he has to pass on me, does he? Before I can claim the rights my years give me. If I had him in an engine cab—"

The possibilities of such a thing sent a wave of exultation over him. And there followed a chilling shadow. Doubt. Fear. You were afraid of these things because you didn't know how exactly to cope with them. Especially when a man had his mind set against you, and regarded you as something that you knew you weren't. That's how it was. Sutter regarded him as inefficient, as a rough handler of equipment, and all because an engine had been overloaded on a wet rail.

Dickerson remembered what Sutter had said about the enginer rating. On paper. But you couldn't railroad on paper. You railroaded by instinct and by

wisdom you got from the years that put gray over your ears.

The oil-can spout found another hole.

The torch flickered in the varying wind. The yellow light played across the set face.

"Hey! Orlie!" Falsetto of excitement in a young voice.

Dickerson whirled, holding the torch above his head and looking beyond it. He saw the crew caller, a slatternly youth, all arms and legs, loping toward him.

"The Old Man, Orlie! Quick!" The youth halted in the flicker.

"What old man? Where?" Dickerson lowered the torch.

"There." The youth pointed. "He said find you. Bring you in—to the office. He's—fit to be tied."

Dickerson went to the office. His right hand itched in the palm. He scratched it against his overalls. He hesitated a moment with his hand on the latch. He hesitated because he heard Superintendent Bolling's voice high-pitched.

Then he went in and Bolling, whipping about, glared at him.

Pendergast leaped out of the swivel. He shouted. "Well, there he is. If you want to take the chance—"

Bolling said, "Chance, hell! We've got to move a train, don't we?"

"Don't tell me I'm maulin' drag freight too hard," Dickerson blurted. "Because if I am, you better wire for Mr. Sutter to come an' ride the caboose an' see what he thinks of my runnin' ability. I wouldn't expect either one of you—"

"Look here, Orlie!" Bolling cut in savagely. "You're going to do a little mauling tonight, and you're going to have Sutter with you to watch you. On passenger. I mean—"

"Passenger!" Dickerson blinked. "But I've got a hundred and thirty cars—"

"You've got second twenty-one, and Engine 3696," Bolling half shouted. "You've got ten cars of mail and ex-

press, a daycoach for the crew to ride in, and the general manager's car on the tail of you, with the big brass hat himself and a staff of his efficiency advisers."

"But—"

"And you've got no time to argue with me," Bolling snapped, producing his thick old watch. "Get your fireman and get on the 3696, and get it over to the station spur."

"You said Sutter—"

"You leave Sutter to me and Al," the superintendent snorted. "Efficiency or no efficiency, by hell, we got to run a railroad. These twenty-one's now. The first one's plenty late because it's got a damn convention ridin' in the extra cars. Delegates. You know. Half drunk. Raising hell. The second one's got all the hot stuff. The mail and such. That's got to travel. You see it does. You beat the hell out of it, but you get it over the road. The G. M.'ll have his watch in his hand—"

"An' all his experts," Dickerson broke in, "will be watchin' their testin' gadgets, an' I'll be sittin' up there in the smoke—"

"Go and sit, then," Bolling yelled. "But get on that engine."



DICKERSON got on it. He hurled answers to his fireman's question over his shoulder as best he could. He pulled into the spur at the depot at exactly 8:55, but there was no sign of the second section. Bolling and Pendergast had ridden over with him, and had run for the telegraph office.

Minutes passed. Tense minutes through which the sweat came out under his cap band, and against the leather palms of his gloves. He rubbed a finger under his nose nervously. He ought to be elated. He ought to be shouting for joy. But he wasn't.

He was looking over his cab fixtures and looking out the window. Sutter. A jinx. And the general manager on at

the rear with all his boys just watching for the slightest thing. He didn't like it. He knew now how a ball player felt with two strikes on him, two out, and the bases full. Dickerson had two strikes.

He swallowed and rubbed his hands together. He looked back down the platform. That second section ought to be showing. Mail and express. The hot stuff.

A movement along the platform caught his eye. The engine was down at the extreme west end of it, and some distance beyond the end of it. The platform lights didn't reach here. But something had moved over there in the shadows.

Dickerson peered against the dim line of shrubbery. A man was standing there, almost dissolved with the dark blob of the shrubbery. He thought, "Bum. God pity a bum that'll try to ride behind the tender on this trip."

Then Pendergast waddled along the platform hurriedly. He came up under the cab and cried: "Five minutes now, Orlie. Five minutes an' the second section'll be rollin' up here."

Dickerson looked at his watch. Nine-eleven. "Plenty late," he mumbled, leaning over the arm rest and looking down. He saw the master mechanic looking anxiously back toward the east.

"Plenty," Pendergast growled. "An' they'll blame us. They'll blame the mechanical department somehow. You're all set?"

"All set," Dickerson said.

"I'm goin' back with Bolling. We'll meet the G. M.'s car. We may have to do a lot of talkin'. Don't you go lettin' us down, Orlie."

"Did I ever?"

"Well—you've pulled a fancy one or two in your years. You roll 'em, Orlie."

Dickerson watched him go. He looked at his timepiece again, stared a long moment at the heavy figures on the dial.

Pale light reached wavering fingers along steel and the ballast at the side of

him. Dickerson straightened. A rumble, a pulsing of the earth. Then a cry. A long cry. And the light grew brighter. The belated mail was coming up the main.

Dickerson crossed to the fireman's side and glanced down the track. The white ball was momentarily blinding. He went back to his throttle. He saw two lanterns. The switch hands would ride him back and cut him in. He glanced over toward the shrubbery. Something in his throat contracted.

He saw briefly a movement. He saw, for the slightest fraction of a second, a face. Then there was nothing. And he didn't like that, somehow. He had no distinct mental photograph of the face, and he shrugged against the concern that it seemed to cause him.

He told himself he was nervous, and he had to snap out of it. He had to snap out of it, or he'd cut all sorts of didoes with the general manager and his retinue.

A voice yelled, "Well, any time tonight," rather savagely.

Dickerson was conscious of a lantern making signals. On the track to his left, the main stem, a snorting big engine was pulling up beyond him. A lamp low in the darkness went suddenly from red to green.

At a touch on his throttle, Dickerson's ponderous drivers turned over. He slid out to the main, waited until the switch light turned, and then backed on to the twelve steel cars.

While the compressors were pumping up the train line in the brake test, a tall, thin figure moved through the shadows at the dim length of wheels, and came up the gangway steps into the cab.

Dickerson, at first, paid no heed, watching back for the signal to release the air. After he had received the signal, and the wave of a lantern which told him to take 'em by the neck, he turned to throttle and whistle. His two deep tones, whistling off, sounded even as his

throttle bar came back, and steam swooshed into the cylinders and exhausted through the stack.

The drivers stayed out of a spin and the long train got into motion with the ease of a polished limousine. Dickerson knew he had 'em without a quiver, without a jerk, and a warmth surged through him as he felt his lever to accelerate the pace when the opportunity presented.

A voice at his shoulder said, "Well?"

Dickerson turned with a start. He had not been aware of another presence. Sutter, thin visage chilling, and ice in his gaze, stood there.

Dickerson hunched his shoulders. His mouth went dry. His heart pounded at his ribs. He didn't know Sutter would actually infest the cab. He nodded and turned back to his running.



THE thunderous voice from his stack, the drum roll of his exhaust, the symphony of whirling tires on rail joints, the backward winnowing of his flat smoke plume, gave Dickerson strong confidence as the miles reeled beneath him.

He told himself that he must pay no heed to those he had behind him, and even less to the one who rode at his shoulder blade. Eighteen years he had stepped 'em across these rolling hills and long tangents, and he had had no unusual trouble. And he would go on rolling 'em, and no power on earth could stop him.

He built himself up mentally with this declaration while emerald lights gleamed in swift succession from the sentinel spires of semaphores. He trembled a little in the fingers when he shut off and played his brake valve around for the scheduled stop at Womrath City.

The exhaust air blasted from its port into the cab, symbol of the terrific power that ninety pounds of high-speed train-line pressure could exert to arrest momentum.

There were sparks at the wheel line, pin-wheel pyrotechnics, and a rumble through the underframe of the train behind him.

Dickerson, crouched on his arm rest, eyes ahead, told himself that he had 'em in his lap. He was putting them down to a perfect halt. They'd have to look out the window sure enough. They'd have to look out back there to see if they actually had come to a stop.

When the engine pointed near the platform edge, he twisted the valve again to allow the wheels free motion for a spell. A free roll that he'd take care of at just the precise moment. Then let Mr. Sutter speak a piece if he so chose.

The platform was under him and an armored car was backed up to it, and he had a quick glimpse of express guards with guns strapped to them. All routine. He had seen this thing a thousand times or more, and so he passed, and played with the brass handle of the brake valve until, looking back, he saw the long train standing, and a glow went through him because he knew he had not so much as raised a grain of dust from the general manager's carpeted floor.

He risked a glance at Sutter, who returned his stare but said nothing.

The uniformed skipper came up beneath the cab and handed in a routine message. Dickerson took it and glanced at it.

The skipper said, "Swell runnin', Or lie. When you can pick up eight minutes in fifty miles with this schedule, you're ballin' the jack. Soon's that Federal Reserve stuff's loaded, we'll walk away from here."

Dickerson watched him go back past where the express messengers were sweating over heavy cases. The messengers, in the platform light, were working swiftly, and now and then you heard a word, an exclamation, a comment on the weather.

Watching them, Dickerson felt the sense of uneasiness that had assailed him

back at the home terminal. That chill shadow. The swift glimpse of a face in the shrubbery came up to him. He looked at his tender. A glance at his watch, and he climbed up over the coal gate.

There was nobody on the tender, no shadowy figure there. But the bulls looked after things like that. That's what the railroad had the bulls for. They saw that suspicious characters didn't ride trains like this.

He returned to his seat just as the truck pulled away from the express car door. A lantern swung, and once again his drivers rolled. Once he thought he might be going to jerk his train, but after the engine had moved a yard or so he knew that, for the second time tonight, he'd executed a perfect start.

He half looked round at Sutter, who had resumed his silent stance at Dickerson's shoulder, but Sutter said nothing. The fireman opened the firebox door and played a tune with the heel of the scoop on the rim. The sucking blaze, in its whiteness, painted the fireman's face, and the smoke streamed back across the cab. The force of the draft caught streamers from the smoke of Sutter's cigarette, and sucked them into the furnace.

Second twenty-one tunneled the dark with its boring silver headlight. Under Dickerson's expert urging its wheels came to put a hundred and thirty-two feet of distance behind it each second for a ninety-mile pace where the tangents permitted.

There was another stop at Sheldonville, where the grade was slightly against him in getting away, but Engineman Orlando Dickerson halted and got going again without a flaw.

The sense of exultation in his stout heart had, by now, wiped out his fears. With Sheldonville swallowed up by the rearward dark, he had clear sailing. He left the double track without a falter, and charged across the single iron for the

remaining seventy miles of the division. He would halt but once more, and that would be at the division point, where he would deliver this second twenty-one on time to another waiting crew. He would halt at the passenger station, and he would let the silent Mr. Sutter say his say.

And then it happened with that amazing, dumfounding swiftness of all events of moment. It happened with no other warning than the rolling of a loose lump of coal from the top of the slanting heap in the tender to the steel apron on the deck. Just a rolling lump, and then another, and then a voice.

A fourth man and then a fifth were standing in the cab, and each of them had leveled guns. One gun pointed at the fireman's wide middle, and the other played first on Dickerson and then on the lean, taut Sutter, who stood with his back to the boiler head and his hands tensed into claws.

The voice came from the man who covered Dickerson. It was a harsh, incisive voice, barked gruffly and loud enough to carry above the engine noises.

"It's a stick-up," the voice said. "We don't wanna hurt you guys."

Dickerson, red with anger, hauled himself out of his seat. The gunman prodded him in the stomach. He sat down again with his lips white beneath the grime, and working wordlessly.

"You got good hearin', feller?" the gunman snarled. "I said we don't wanna hurt you guys. We won't—unless we have to. You do what I tell you. An' no trick moves. I savvy this loco, see? I savvy it plenty. You look right on ahead like nothin' was loose, see? An' you."

He thrust a harsh jaw forward. Sutter backed before it.

"You stand there. Against the back-head. You keep your hands high. Like that."

Dickerson looked ahead, but not before he saw Sutter reach upward. Dicker-

son remembered the face in the shrubbery, back at the starting point. He couldn't tell whether either of these faces might have been that one. He couldn't tell anything except that something was about to happen. Something beyond his understanding.



ANOTHER glance at Sutter. Sutter's head was turned toward the fireman's side.

The fireman was crouched with his back to his seat box. The fireman—oh, God!

It was a quick report. Like a torpedo under a driver. Just once the gun spoke. Acrid smoke in the cab, winnowing out with the side draft past Dickerson's nostrils.

The fireman on the floor. He saw the fireman go over, face first, clawing at his stomach. Blood on the grimy overalls. The fireman clawing.

Sweat beaded his brow. Cold sweat suddenly soaked his back beneath his overclothes. Sutter was white and trembling. His hands above his head shook. Sutter standing there, and the fireman still as death on the deck.

The gunman who'd fired stirred the crumpled body with his foot. Dickerson felt weak at the middle. The air rushing in at his open window braced him. The gunman was rolling the fireman out of the way, over against the left-hand seat.

The churning drivers clicked out the madness of their pace. The blurring clatter over the rail joints. The bouncing of the cab. The gunmen stood easily as if they both knew how to handle themselves in a cab.

And the fireman was dead. He had tried a quick move. He had reached for a wrench, stealthily. Dickerson could feel a wrench he used with his right foot. It was on the floor just in front of his seatbox, and against the cab wall. He could reach down and almost touch it without exciting suspicion. It was

there by the injector overflow valve. Perhaps if he could get his wrench—

His heart flopped. There were two of them. A wrench wouldn't help much. While he was hitting one, another would plug him. They would work that way. A quick puff, a flash, and he'd go to glory as his fireman had done.

He thought of his cargo. He didn't know the value of it. Enginemen never know that. He only knew there were some guards in the express cars, or at least in one of them, and there was something probably worth a haul.

These gunmen looked like they knew their business. He had never seen one before, Dickerson remembered. Only pictures. Every now and then there was a picture in the paper. These men. They looked like killing wouldn't mean a thing to them.

That wrench! He moved his right foot around and his toes touched it. It was a big wrench. He could get in one good sock. He could smash hard.

The gunman's breath was on his cheek. The man was saying, "Look, hoghead!"

Dickerson turned to look, but the gun prodded.

"Not at me!" The words were hurled at him savagely. "If you don't want what the tallowpot got, you listen. You do what I tell you."

Dickerson gulped. He didn't have much choice. He was leaping through the night at better than eighty with twelve heavy steel cars whipping along on his tail.

The gunman snarled, "This side of the Cotter Bridge."

Dickerson saw the bridge in his mind. It was a long wooden span across a deep ravine. At the bottom of the ravine there was some sort of stream called Cotter Creek. He caught his breath sharply. Desolate. Far from any telegraph office. Far from anything but a highway. A highway crossed near there.

"There's a whistle board this side of the Cotter Bridge," the gunman said.

"That's where you stop. You stop a minute. Then, when I say so, you go ahead again. Across the bridge."

He didn't say any more. Dickerson half turned to him. The gun poked into his lower ribs.

"At the sign—the whistle post," the gunman repeated. "You stop. I know when you oughtta shut off to stop there, see? So you do it."

Dickerson nodded. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. His mouth was dry and he licked his lips. At the whistle post. He would stop, then he would go ahead again. It came to him suddenly.

He would go ahead again with a car. Or maybe two cars. Away from the rest of the train. He would probably haul them across the bridge, and then be stopped again where the looting could go on. It was probably all organized, all planned a long way ahead. The highway was on the other side of the bridge about two miles. They might stop there.

He sucked in his breath. What would happen then? Would these gunmen cripple the locomotive, shoot down the remaining members of the crew and make good their escape? That would be the play, undoubtedly.

Dickerson's cheeks burned. His eyes were abnormally bright. His brain was a white-hot flash. That would be the play. There were probably others waiting at the highway. There were probably others on the train. How they got on, or just what they might be doing, he could not guess. But this had been organized. Some shipment that somebody knew about was back there in one of those cars. It had been all planned, or else how would these mugs know of the whistle post fifty feet this side of the Cotter Bridge?

The gun, prodding him, brought him back to the grim reality of the moment. Dickerson saw a church in the outer glow of his headlight. A white church with a spire. A little fence around it,

and grave stones behind the fence. The Cotter Bridge was nearing. The gunman had used the church as a landmark.

Dickerson reached up and shoved the throttle shut. Immediately the exhaust died in the stack and the engine coasted through a tense silence broken only by the whistle of the wind past the open windows.

Reaching for the brass handle of his brake valve, Dickerson glanced over his shoulder and saw Sutter, pale and drawn, and somehow sagging against the backhead. Sutter had white lines about his mouth, and there seemed something pathetically comical about this hardboiled efficiency expert so helpless.

A barn in a field. A slight bend to the left. Ever so slight. The bridge in the far distance on the tangent.

And Sutter was riding tonight to decide whether Dickerson could handle the air. What was that Sutter had said? Oh yes, "When you can convince us that you can use air brakes without shaking the insides out of passengers—"

Dickerson gulped. Suddenly, with a choking in his throat, he knew there was a chance. The wrench would be a secondary weapon. The wrench could come into play. He would have to be quick. It would take timing. It would take precision. It would take a master touch, but it could be done.

He looked over his shoulders. He took in the picture. The gunman that had him covered was just behind him, and slightly to one side of Dickerson. The other gunman, with gun also leveled, was across the cab, about two feet back of the left side of the fire door with the still body of the fireman at his feet.

This was the picture. Ahead was the bridge. He twisted the brake valve handle around.

He looked back along the rolling train. Fire showed at the wheels. He was using a fifteen-pound reduction. That would be enough. He would ease them

down. Sutter had said he would have to convince him that Dickerson knew how to handle that little brass valve. Ninety pounds of pressure in the line. Ninety pounds to the square inch, enough to arrest a million plunging tons of steel and brass.

The momentum was checked easily, expertly. A hurried glance over his shoulder and Dickerson saw the gunmen were still in position. Guns still trained. They had not moved.

A glance at the ground. His practised eye told him. His speed was fifteen. Now twelve. Now ten—eight miles an hour. He could tell by the feel, and the roll. Eight miles an hour. That was what he wanted. He looked ahead.

Another fifty yards to the whistle post. Eight miles an hour. Just rolling. No air on the wheels. He had seen to that. All rolling free.

Dickerson's hand traveled from the big brake valve to the small brass handle above it. The independent brake, they call it. It works on engine and tender wheels alone. Just those. The other wheels were free.

His fingers wanted to tremble as they closed around the handle. His heart was in his throat. He imagined he could hear it hammering above the drift of the engine. He was leaning far forward. His left hand tensed on the valve. His right hand slipped down at his side, out of sight of the gunmen. He felt the handle of the wrench. It would take timing. He would have to be fast. It was a chance. Just a bare chance.

He took the chance with a sudden twist of his left hand that sent the independent brake into emergency.

The effect was terrific. The effect was what Air Brake Expert Dickerson figured it would be. The effect was, in a word, about the same as if the engine and train, rolling at eight miles an hour, had suddenly slammed into an irresistible wall.

Everything stopped! Right now!

Dickerson only had expected it. He only was braced for it. The two gunmen, caught flatfooted, were hurled against the backhead of the boiler. One went down with his gun barking wildly. Sutter, already with his back to the boiler butt, bumped his head and went down in a heap. The other gunmen were tangled with clinked hook, extra scoop, shaker bar and an assortment of tools that had come clattering down from the tender.

Dickerson was on his feet with his wrench swinging. With one hand he released the independent air and yanked open his throttle as wide as it would go. With the other he struck out.

Flame bit savagely in his face and something went *spat* right close to him. His wrench found the first gunman's skull and that man lay still.

There was a sudden searing along his side that half spun him round, staggering him. He had a quick picture of fierce eyes centered on him. He saw the gun arm coming up again. The man who had shot down the fireman. He was on one knee. The gun was coming up. . .

Dickerson made a dive. He still had his wrench, but just as he swung, his hand seemed paralyzed. His hand seemed no longer a part of him. His wrench dropped. But he didn't. He kept on, and he lit flat out like a frog taking to water. He lit out and smothered the gunman beneath his giant bulk. The pain in the useless hand was intense, and he didn't know whether he was using it. But he was using the other, and he was hammering.

He hammered and gouged one-handed for what seemed a long time. Once the gunman had got him by the throat, and then he was first conscious of bleeding. It was the useless hand. Dripping blood that way.

Somehow he had broken the hold, and smashed into the dark face with his bleeding fist, and the dark eyes in the

dimness of the gauge lamp seemed suddenly to glaze.

The man beneath him lay still. The engine deck danced madly. Open throttle. Yes, he remembered, he had laced her out. He had given her all she had. This engine. She was dancing the miles. He tried to get up. He was giddy. He blinked and tried again, pulling himself up by holding to the iron shelf above the fire door.

It seemed an eternity before his feet would hold him, and then he felt tired and useless, and wanted to sit down where he was and go to sleep. He fought back unconsciousness. Of five men that had been alive there just a few moments ago, he alone seemed left. The bridge was long behind him. And the highway.

He had consciousness enough to realize that all danger was over unless one of these men happened to come back to life. But he wasn't doing so well. Seventy, eighty—whatever his speed. That wouldn't do. He staggered blindly over and reached the throttle bar. It took effort to get it shut. He closed it. He knew it was shut because it was suddenly very quiet in the cab.

The air valve. He twisted it. Some one leaned over him. He thought it was Sutter. What had Sutter said? Oh yes, about shaking the insides out. He must make a good stop, a perfect stop. It wouldn't do now to scramble 'em up again back in the general manager's car. It wouldn't do—

Vast darkness, as if the headlight had suddenly gone out. Vast darkness and bright pain, and a hissing. A seething exhaust of air. His hand on the brake. He had to get 'em down—quietly—so—they'd have—to—look—out—the window—to see—if—they—were stopped.



A MILLING of men in the dim light. And Sutter. It was Sutter speaking. Sutter was saying: "Not a man in a million would have thought of it. Dickerson thought of it. Don't you see? Standing 'em on their heads that way?"

The general manager said: "A man in a million handling air. My God! The way he stood us on our heads, and the two thugs that had the express car covered. What's his name?"

"Dickerson, sir." That was Bolling's voice. "A crack runner. Looks like, from the shape this cab's in, he did a noble job. If we can get him to a doctor—"

Dickerson sat up on the cab seat. He was tightly bandaged here and there, but consciousness had returned fully, and with it strength.

"Doctor? I don't need a doctor. I need a man to fire and—" He looked around at them. The whole cabful. He saw Pendergast.

Pendergast said, "I did it once."

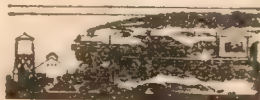
Pendergast was a good guy. Like Bolling. Old-timer.

There was a fumbling for his good hand—his left one. The general manager said something gruffly. And then they were getting down from the high cab, and going back. All but Pendergast, the master mechanic, and Bolling, the division boss.

Bolling sighed. He brought in his head, from looking back.

"Highball," he said, dragging out his watch. "We're late. And look here, Orlie. No more fancy stops tonight. After that last one—" He rubbed the back of his head, significantly. Pendergast bent over the scoop.

Good guys. They knew. Even the best of 'em handled 'em rough once in a while.





THE FEUD AT SINGLE SHOT

By Luke Short

Synopsis:

Fourth of Five Parts

DAVE TURNER and his friend Rosy Rand, whom he had met when both were confined in the Yuma penitentiary, were on their way back to Dave's ranch, the D Bar T, near Single Shot, when their train was held up by bandits seeking three mine pay-rolls in the baggage car—a hold-up which was thwarted mostly through the quick acting and thinking of the two.

But this caused them to get no heroes' reception when they arrived at Single Shot. The sheriff met them at the station and suggested that they ride on to the next stop, Soledad, apparently because Dave was considered a bad man, although the killing for which he had been sent away had seemed justifiable to most people.

At Soledad Dave's sister Mary met

them, to report that the D Bar T was in a bad way. Nesters had squatted on the ranch and a man named Hammond who had started a gold mine, the Draw Three, in a nearby arroyo, was claiming the ownership of a lake on Dave's land. As the three rode home Dave was shot from ambush, but Rosy killed the bushwhacker. It took Dave only one night to recover from his wound—and from his astonishment at learning that Mary had married an Eastern mining man named Winters—so on the following day he and Rosy took the corpse of the ambusher into the sheriff at Single Shot, despite his orders that they stay out of town. Then Dave negotiated a loan from Pearson, the town banker, while Rosy talked with Quinn, a friendly gambler, who suggested that the dead man might have

been employed by Hammond, the miner.

When Dave, accompanied by Rosy and the sheriff, accused Hammond of attempting to cause his assassination a fight followed which the sheriff stopped. Dave got into another fight when he went to deal with his nesters, but he got them to agree to raise alfalfa on his land on shares.

A storm came up that night and Dave and Rosy were awakened by what they thought was thunder, but when the sound was repeated they realized it was dynamite exploding. Riding out to investigate, they discovered that part of the edge of Dave's lake had been blown away, so that all the water drained out, making the D Bar T dry and worthless.

Their first thought was that Hammond had done it, but in town they discovered that the water had flooded his mine, killing seven of his men, and had caused him to break his leg. Also Rosy noted that boot tracks he found near the scene of the explosion could not have been made by Hammond's boots.

Hammond in turn thought Dave had set off the charge, but after a serious conversation under the direction of the sheriff, in which Hammond's daughter Dorsey took part, the two former enemies became friends and agreed that the dynamiting was probably instigated by a mysterious man named Crowell, who had been trying to get hold of both the mine and the ranch.

Later this Crowell came out to the D Bar T and attempted to get Mary to sell her half of the ranch on the pretext that Dave had sold his. Mary refused, and after Crowell had gone away Rosy, who was hidden in the room, heard Winters curse and strike Mary. Rosy knew by this time that Winters was crooked and in cahoots with Crowell, because he had found that Winters' boots matched the prints found by the lake and because Quinn told him Winters had lost a thousand dollars gambling—a thousand dollars which Quinn mailed

with an anonymous letter to Mary. A puncher called Laredo Jackson also tipped off Rosy to the fact that he was being followed by a henchman of a rustler named Sayres.

It was this same Sayres who a little later captured Dave in the bad-lands near the lake and tortured him till he signed away his half of the ranch. From Sayres Dave chanced to learn that there was another man—called the Boss—in the deal besides Crowell, and that his gang had kidnaped a girl whom Dave supposed to be Mary. Dave also saw that one of the gang had been among the bandits that held up the payroll train.

CHAPTER XIV

KIDNAPED



LAREDO set his glass down and eyed the bandage on the head of the bartender. His stomach was warming up anew.

"Where'd you git that?" he asked.

The bartender eyed him sourly. "I'm tellin' you for the last time, I think you give it to me last night. Now don't ask again because I won't tell you another time. Because when you ask again you'll be drunk and pick a fight with me."

Laredo nodded. There was truth in what the man said, he reflected.

"How sure are you I give it to you?" he asked mildly.

"Now quit rawhidin' me," the bartender whined. He was a pasty-faced individual save for his nose, which was blue-veined and bulbous. "If you're tryin' to make fight talk, then you didn't give it to me."

"I ain't makin' fight talk," Laredo protested mildly. "I'm just tryin' to get this straight. I don't remember it."

"Then it was that pardner of yours."

"Might be," Laredo said noncommittally.

The bartender shook his head. "It was a sorry day for Chris Lenning when he ordered you throwed out of the Mile High."

"I aim to make it a sorry one for him," Laredo announced. "Fill it up." He shoved his glass across the bar.

It was accepted with reluctance by the bartender. "Listen, Jackson. Do me a favor, will you?" he asked.

"I reckon not. What is it?"

"If you're gettin' drunk again, put it off two hours, will you? I git off at four. I reckon I've had my share of your hellery."

"Nope," Laredo said flatly. "That's somethin' I can't interfere with. That's delayin' the course of nature. If a horse is thirsty you let him drink, don't you?"

"Not if he acts like you do when he gits full," the bartender declared.

"You shet up," Laredo said quietly. "If you couldn't put up with me, I reckon you should never have took the job. I go with the place, ask anybody."

"Hell, I don't have to."

Laredo's gaze, a little befuddled, swept up to the mirror and what he saw made him blink. He turned slowly.

Rosy was standing by the swinging doors. He looked around the saloon, saw Laredo, and came over.

"Oh, Lord! Again," the bartender moaned.

"Hello, Red. Have a drink," Laredo offered, then saw the grim set to Rosy's jaw. "What's the matter?"

"You sober?" Rosy asked swiftly.

"Some."

"Where's the sheriff? I can't find him."

"Asleep, likely. What's the trouble?"

"Then you'll have to do it," Rosy said.

"First thing, do you mind gettin' in a scrap?"

Laredo's eyes narrowed and he grinned. "I never turned one down yet."

"All right. Second thing. Can you tell

me how I get to Sayres' hang-out?"

Laredo whistled softly and nodded. "You ride north up the valley until you come to a black lava bed on the east bank," he began. "When you git there you've gone too far, so turn back and watch the east bank. A half mile below the lava bed, you'll come to a big piñon on the bank that hangs clean over the creek-bed. Got that?"

"Sure," Rosy said impatiently.

"There's a lightnin'-struck navajo pine a couple of hundred yards east of the piñon, toward the mountain. Line that piñon up with the pine and you'll see the line points right off the top of the pine to a little, dinky notch in them mountains."

"Well?"

"Head for that notch, and if you come across a trail keep off it. Sayres has got a bunch of them whippoorwills guardin' every trail and they'll cut down on you without askin' why. Head for that notch. It's a pass and it'll be guarded. I dunno how you'll get through that, but once you do, you won't have no trouble following the trail to Sayres' place."

"All right. Third thing," Rosy said. "There's a *hombre* here in town by the name of Crowell. Know him?"

Laredo shook his head.

"Hank Lowe is lookin' for him," Rosy said slowly. He's connected with the dynamitin' of the D Bar T lake."

Laredo nodded attentively.

"Now get this careful," Rosy said slowly. "It all depends on how careful you get it. Crowell will be here at the hotel, registered. I want you to pick a scrap with him and fix it up with Hank so that Crowell is arrested and locked in jail. Got that?"

"Sure."

"Now here's what you got to remember, and to tell Hank. Crowell has got to be locked up, but he mustn't suspect that we know he's connected with the dynamitin'! Hank has got to lock him

up on a phony charge and hold him till I get back."

"All right," Laredo said soberly, "but you better write Hank a note explainin' that."

Rosy called for some paper and pencil and wrote a short note to the sheriff. He hoped desperately that the sheriff would take his orders and not give everything away. Every minute counted now and he could not afford to waste time hunting him up. In his haste he had left Mary at the saloon door, with instructions for her to ride out to Hammond's and explain to Dorsey the circumstances that brought her. Dave's life might hang on the few minutes that it took to ride with Mary to Hammond's and tell the sheriff.

He handed the note to Laredo. "Make Hank believe it, Laredo," Rosy told him. "It's our necks if you don't."

"You git on," Laredo growled. "I'll take care of him and Crowell both. Time I'm finished with this Crowell he'll think he's been holdin' up trains in his sleep. How do I know him though?"

Rosy described Crowell quickly. "Hang around the clerk in the hotel and have him point Crowell out to you. And have Hank hold him till I get back. Remember, till I get back!"

Rosy started for the door, stopped in midstride, and hesitated a moment. Then he returned to the bar, picked up the pencil and wrote another note.

It read:

QUINN: Mary Winters is in town, and so is Winters. Keep an eye on him.

RAND.

He handed it to Laredo. "And give this to Quinn over at the Free Throw."

Laredo nodded. "Good luck, son," he called, his eyes suddenly anxious, but Rosy was through the doors.



WHEN Rosy left Mary at the Mile High, she wanted to ask him a thousand questions, but his frown stopped her. She didn't even know why he was in such a hurry.

After asking at a store where Hammond lived, she mounted and rode down the street. The house was at the edge of town and she found it easily. It was small, white, with a neat yard. Cottonwoods lifted their lacework umbrellas over it and small cedars dotted the yard.

Mary dismounted at the gate and walked slowly to the door. This was going to be a little awkward but she hoped Dorsey Hammond would understand. The door was open a few inches, but her knock was unanswered.

"There must be some one here," she thought and swung the door open further.

A table lay squarely in front of the door, a white rectangle of envelope shining on its dark surface. She looked at the envelope lying there as if intended for her. On it was written in bold letters: TO YOU.

"How queer," she murmured. She picked it up, turned it over with cautious speculation, then opened it. Inside was a note, reading:

TO BUCK HAMMOND

You will never see yer dawter agen until you pay 50,000\$. We hav her and eny atempt to get her will meen deth for her

if you want to see her agen folow thees dreckshuns—we will giv you a day to get the munny on friday morning send sumwun with it on the eest bownd trane. the munny must be in wun hundred doler bills. rap them in a wite sock and so it up. giv the man caryng the munny a wach and hav him sit on the north sid of the car. after the trane has pulled over the graid at wagen wheel pass he will see a hors which will be yor gurls paynt hors puled clost to the side of the trax. hav him cownt too minutes by the wach frum the tim he pases the hors. when the too minuts is up hav him thro the sock owt the windo

if the trane slos up or ennywun gets
of yor gurl will be put to death. if we
get the munny she will be hom saturday
or sundy.

you have only wun chanst so beter take
it

be shur the sock is wite.

It was unsigned. Mary read it twice before she realized the import. She called Dorsey's name but there was no answer. Then she ran from the house and in one light spring was on her horse.

At Dr. Fullerton's the housekeeper answered her knock and took her to Hammond. He looked up at her, his kindly face curious.

"I'm Mary Winters," she said breathlessly. "I just called at your house and found this note on the table."

"Sit down, please," Hammond said, wondering at her anxious manner. He unfolded the note leisurely and read. Mary could see his hands tremble as he progressed deeper into the sinister message.

When he finished he groaned softly and let the note drop to the bedcover, and stared at the wall.

"I read it," Mary said quietly. "Oh, what can I do, Mr. Hammond?"

"What can any of us do?" Hammond asked thickly. "They knew I was in bed and helpless. They knew she'd be home alone." He broke off and looked at Mary with imploring eyes. "I reckon you better tell Hank Lowe. There's nothin' to do but pray they don't kill her before I get the money."

"Then I'll take it to him right now," Mary stood up. Impulsively she leaned over and patted his rough hand, trying to put encouragement and hope in her smile. "They'll get her back, Mr. Hammond." She hurried out to hide the doubt and fear in her eyes.

She mounted and rode swiftly down to the sheriff's office. He was unlocking his office door just as she swung into the hitch-rack.

She entered as he was sitting down,

and upon seeing her, he swung out of his seat with a grunt.

"Dorsey Hammond has been kidnapped!" Mary told him bluntly, offering him the letter. The sheriff merely blinked and took it, opening it and reading it slowly.

Finished, he called: "Van!"

The door to the back room swung open and a sleepy-eyed deputy walked in.

"Git a posse up," the sheriff said. "Meet me up at Buck Hammond's place. His gal has been kidnapped."

The deputy got his hat and ran out the door and the sheriff turned to Mary.

"Mr. Lowe, will you—can you—will they get her?" Mary asked, her voice troubled and low.

"Damn, yes!" the sheriff exploded. "They will if I got to call the army out to git her."

"Can I help?" Mary asked.

The sheriff smiled wearily. "Ain't nobody that can't shoot can help, Mrs. Winters. I'm much obliged to you for bringin' the note to me. I'm goin' to see Buck Hammond right now."

The sheriff got his hat and waddled out of the office, leaving Mary alone. She stood looking at his vacant chair a moment, then shook herself and stepped out the door. The only thing left to do was to go to the hotel and wait for Rosy or Dave.

CHAPTER XV

MURDER CHARGE



AFTER Rosy left him, Laredo finished his drink and started his search for the sheriff. He tried the office four times at five-minute intervals and found the door locked. Each time, his disgust increased.

"You'd think San Angel county never had a sheriff when you want to find the durn fool," he growled.

At the fourth try, finding the door still

locked, he remembered the note Rosy had given him for Quinn. He went over to the Free Throw, delivered the note, bought a couple of drinks and went back to the sheriff's office.

This time the door was open. The sheriff had come and gone, evidently, for there was no one around.

Laredo made himself at home. He thought of Rosy's strange request to pick a fight with Crowell. He wondered how he could do it the easiest. An idea came to him and he sat down in the sheriff's chair, reached down and pulled out a bottom drawer where he remembered the sheriff kept the reward notices.

There was a drawerful of them and Laredo dumped them all out on top of the desk, then set about looking through them. He kept Rosy's description of Crowell in mind as he leafed through the cards. Laredo could not read, but the picture was what he was after. Presently, he paused in his work and held up a card with a picture of a man on it. The printed matter might have been in Greek, but the face suited him.

He took the card and walked to the door, where he waited until a woman turned down the street at the bank corner. She was a middle-aged woman, in a hurry apparently.

As she drew abreast the door, Laredo greeted her: "Howdy, ma'am." He held the picture out. "Can you tell me the name of that jasper?" he inquired politely.

The woman's surprised look shifted from Laredo's face to the card. "W-w-why no," she stammered. "I don't know him. I never saw him before."

"I don't mean that, ma'am," Laredo said. "I mean, what does it say on the card? What does it say his name is? I can't read."

The woman sighed with relief and looked again at the card. "It says: 'This is the face that has terrified a thousand criminals and has trained a thousand detectives—J. J. Johns, Master De-

tective. The Continental Detective Bureau. He can teach you'."

Laredo looked at her blankly. "Detectative Bureau? What's that?"

"Some one's learning to be a detective from him—this Mister Johns, the Master Detective, I guess," the woman said.

"Well, I'll be damned," Laredo muttered. The woman passed on hurriedly, leaving him standing there. Laredo turned the card over and for the first time noticed it was the cover for a book.

"Hank Lowe astudyin' to be a detectative," he muttered, "Well, I'll be damned."

He shook his head soberly and then began to laugh. Returning to the desk, he leafed through the cards again until he found the same type of face as the one on the book cover.

The next passer-by he stopped was Pearson, the banker.

"Howdy, Mr. Pearson," Laredo drawled from the doorway. "Reckon you can tell me what this poster says?"

Pearson, stiff and unbending, looked briefly at the placard Laredo held out for him to read. "'Wanted, for murder'," he read aloud, "'in El Paso, Texas. Simon Henry. Reward: five thousand dollars. Last seen'—do you want me to go on?"

"Nope, that's enough. Much obliged," Laredo said. Pearson bowed stiffly, resumed his leisurely pace toward the corner, Laredo watching him. "Durn. It didn't take him long to savvy it."

Laredo kept this placard out, put the rest in the desk and sat down, cocking his feet up on the desk top and slowly building a cigarette.

He had just thrown away the cigarette butt when Sheriff Lowe entered, a scowl on his face.

"What do *you* want?" he growled at Laredo. "Ain't I got enough trouble without havin' you swarm in here?"

"You ain't had any trouble compared to what you're goin' to have, Deteckative Lowe," Laredo observed dryly.

A slow flush suffused the sheriff's face. "So you been lookin' through my stuff, huh?"

"Me?" Laredo asked innocently. "Why, Deteckative Lowe! I wouldn't be that low-down."

"What I shoulda' done is sent you out on that posse," the sheriff growled.

"Posse? What for?"

"Why, Buck Hammond's gal has been kidnaped—took right out of their place. Ain't you heard? I just got the posse off. I'm too danged busy to ride on one myself."

Laredo stared at him. "Well, I'm damned. Which way did they go?"

"Tracks out behind Hammond's barn looked like they was travelin' south, but you can't tell."

Laredo shook his head slowly. He reached in his pocket for the note Rosy had given him and offered it to the sheriff.

"That's from young Rand, and he give me some instructions to you to go with it."

Laredo told the sheriff what Rosy had told him. As he progressed, the sheriff sank into a chair, his mouth open. When Laredo was finished and the sheriff had read the note, he threw his hat on the floor and cursed bitterly.

"And he wants me to arrest Crowell—the jasper that's behind all this grief of mine and his, and not even tell the danged coyote what I'm arrestin' him for. Damned if I will! I'm double, ring-tailed damned if I will!"

"Yes you will," Laredo said gently.

"Where is Rand?" the sheriff stormed. "Gone."

"Gone? Where? And I'm supposed to think up somethin' to arrest Crowell for, when I danged well got enough to hang the coyote on now."

"Yes you will," Laredo repeated gently. "You don't know what Rand knows. Neither do I, but he knows enough to know what he's talkin' about."

"Say!" the sheriff said suddenly, "And

I'll bet this Crowell was behind the kidnapin' of Buck Hammond's gal!"

"Why?"

"If he'd dynamite a lake, he'd steal a gal, wouldn't he?" the sheriff said.

"He might," Laredo conceded. "But what are you gettin' so red-headed about? You'll have Crowell in jail, won't you? All Rand wants you to do is keep Crowell iggerant of why you're arrestin' him."

The sheriff thought this over a minute and could make no objections to it. He was vaguely resentful of Rosy's orders, but he had learned to respect Rosy's hunches.

"All right," he said finally, "but how we goin' to do it?"

Laredo explained his plan, showing Hank the placard he had saved out. "This looks considerably like Crowell, from what Rand said. I'll go over to the hotel and throw a gun on him and bring him over here and tell you his name is Simon Henry, and that he murdered some jasper in El Paso. You bring out the card." He grinned. "It can't help but work."

"But damn it," the sheriff objected. "He'll want a lawyer, and the lawyer will get him out on bail. He'll jump bail then and won't show up."

"I've thought of that too," Laredo drawled. "Who's the prosecutin' attorney here? Benning, ain't he?"

The sheriff nodded.

"How many other lawyers is there?"

"Two, I reckon. Hartwick and Scoggins," the sheriff said.

"All right. You go to Benning and tell him to hire Hartwick and Scoggins to help prosecute the Henry case that's comin' up. Pay 'em enough and they'll side in with you. Then arrest Crowell and there won't be any lawyers in town to hire, because they'll all be hired by the prosecution. Don't that make sense?"

The sheriff thought a moment. "Plenty. Only, who's goin' to pay for all the



advice they don't give? Them two will ask high fees."

"Let them argy that out between themselves." Laredo said calmly. "That's what lawyers is for."

The sheriff shook his head wearily. "Danged if it might not work at that. I'll go see Benning."



WHEN the arrangements were completed with the lawyers to the sheriff's satisfaction, Laredo went over to the hotel.

The same old man was back of the desk and Laredo quizzed him.

"Gent by the name of Crowell registered here?"

"Sure."

"Is he in?"

"Come in a couple of hours ago. Want to see him?"

"I'd sure admire to," Laredo said.

The clerk called a small boy from a back room and sent him upstairs to get Crowell.

Laredo leaned on the desk and waited. Presently, Crowell came down the stairs with the boy. Rosy had been pretty accurate in his description. Crowell was short, dynamic, and he was wearing a scowl on his dark face as he approached the desk. Laredo noticed idly a gun in a shoulder holster. He was dressed in neat black, and his voice was resonant and confident as he addressed the clerk.

"Some one want to see me?"

"This gent," the clerk said, indicating Laredo.

Crowell looked at Laredo coldly. "Well?"

"I been lookin' for you a considerable while," Laredo said. "So you're registerin' under the name of Crowell now?"

Crowell's dark eyes glinted coldly, but not a muscle in his face moved. The two of them were about the same size, except now Laredo was lounging on the desk.

"Who are you?" Crowell asked.

"Jackson's the name," Laredo drawled.

"I saw you on the street a couple of hours ago and I been wonderin' ever since where I saw you before. I got it now. You're Simon Henry." He paused. "Are you goin' over to the sheriff's office without a fight?"

"Who do you think you're talking to?" Crowell asked quietly. "You've got the

wrong party. My name is Crowell, A. J. Crowell. I'm here on business."

"Your name is Henry, Simon Henry," Laredo repeated flatly. "Wanted for murder in El Paso. Are you comin' to the sheriff's office or am I goin' to have to take you?"

Crowell turned to the clerk who had overheard the conversation. "You heard this, didn't you, clerk?"

The clerk nodded. Crowell turned to Laredo. "I'm not going."

"I reckon you are," Laredo said.

He saw the flicker of Crowell's eyes and the muscles tense through the upper part of Crowell's sleeve. Laredo's gun blurred up from his hip to settle in Crowell's midriff before the taller man got his hand well inside his coat to his shoulder holster. "Think again," Laredo drawled. He reached up and took the gun from Crowell.

Crowell shrugged.

"Take me to the sheriff, then. Either you're a madman or else mistaken—I hope honestly."

Sheriff Lowe was seated at the desk when the two entered.

"I got a prisoner for you, Sheriff," Laredo said. "Name of Simon Henry. Wanted in El Paso for murder. I was tryin' to think all mornin' who he was and finally it come to me. Simon Henry."

"Look here, Sheriff," Crowell said heatedly. "This man approaches me in the hotel and sticks a gun in my ribs and orders me over here with the pretense that I'm a murderer. What's it all about?"

"I dunno," the sheriff said heavily. "Just keep your shirt on. I'll see if we have anything about a jasper named Henry." With deliberation, he pulled the bottom drawer of his desk out and dumped its contents on the desk top. His slowness was maddening as he shuffled through the notices, finally extracting a card which he viewed critically for a full minute, then looked at Crowell.

"Here's a picture of Henry. It looks mighty like you."

"Let's see," Crowell said. He studied the card the sheriff handed him, then shrugged. "I've seen forty people like you, Sheriff, one a horse-thief. That doesn't make you out one, does it?"

"I dunno about that," Laredo said innocently.

"About what?" the sheriff said coldly.

"About that not meanin' anything," Laredo said. "If you looked like a hoss-thief and somebody accused you of it, you'd have to prove you wasn't, wouldn't you?"

"I reckon," the sheriff agreed slowly. He addressed Crowell. "This here says you murdered a cattle-buyer for Lynch's, name of Louis Peyton, on the night of August seventh, last year. Where was you then?"

"How should I know?" Crowell replied heatedly. "I don't keep a diary."

"A what?" the sheriff asked.

"I don't keep track of where I was every day and night of the year. Where were you on August seventh last year?"

"He was courtin' a old maid by the name of Lizzie May that was visitin' Robbie Blackman's wife's sister," Laredo said. "Ain't that so, Sheriff?"

Sheriff Lowe glared at him and squirmed in his seat. "I reckon. Well, Henry. What about it?"

"I'm not saying a thing," Crowell retorted. "I want a lawyer."

"Why sure," the sheriff said. "I reckon you got a right to have a lawyer. We got two here in town. Which one you want?"

"Either of them. No, get them both," Crowell said.

The sheriff turned to Laredo. "You git 'em."

Laredo shook his head. "And let this desprit criminal out of my sight? Not me. I'm stayin' here until I see him locked up."

The sheriff swore and hoisted himself to his feet. When he opened the door to

the back room, voices drifted in. Soon, he returned with a deputy who went out the street door on the errand for the lawyers. Crowell paced the room nervously under the eyes of the two men.

"What did you kill this here Peyton for?" the sheriff asked suddenly.

Crowell stopped and stared blankly at him. "Peyton? Oh I—"

"See there," Laredo said. "Any one could tell he was just pretending."

Crowell glared at him, but kept his tongue, and continued his pacing. Suddenly, he stopped short and snapped his fingers. "I know where I was August seventh last year. I was in North Dakota. Aspen Wells, North Dakota."

"Where's that?" the sheriff asked.

"Western part. Near the bad-lands."

"Got a railroad?"

Crowell remembered his mistake too late. "No," he growled.

"Well, we'll have to lock you up until we can hear from the marshal or sheriff there. Who seen you there?"

"Moore, a storekeeper," Crowell growled. "Look here, Sheriff. Do you mean I have to stay in town until you can get word from the marshal that I was in Aspen Wells?"

"I reckon that's it," the sheriff said.

The deputy entered the street door, alone.

"Well?" Crowell asked.

"They won't take the case," the deputy answered. "They say they been engaged by the prosecutin' attorney to help put Henry in jail."

Crowell stared helplessly at him. "You say—" he turned to the sheriff. "Does this mean I can't have a lawyer, Sheriff?"

"Why no. I reckon you can have as many as you want if you can find any."

Crowell glared at him murderously. "I want a hearing and I want it right now," he stormed.

The sheriff shook his head sorrowfully. "The jedge is in Walpais. Won't be back until tomorrow night."

"And I've got to stay in jail until then?" Crowell asked slowly.

"I don't see no other way," the sheriff explained. "If you had a lawyer, maybe you could get out. But there's nothin' for me to do except lock up all the murder suspects that come my way."

Crowell cursed savagely.

"Now, now," the sheriff said soothingly. "We got a right nice jail. I'll get a telegram off to the nearest railroad town to Aspen Wells. I reckon when the jedge comes, you can get out on bail." He reached into a drawer and drew out a pair of handcuffs which he handed to the waiting deputy. "Take him over to the courthouse, Van, and turn him over to King." He looked at Crowell and shook his head. "You ought to confess, Henry. It'd save us both trouble."

Crowell was led out, still cursing. Laredo stood in the doorway watching him and two deputies go up the street to the courthouse. He turned to the sheriff.

"Well?"

"I hope they don't meet the jedge on the way," the sheriff said. "He ain't left town for three years. And if they do meet him, that danged fool of a Van will call him Jedge right in front of Crowell."

CHAPTER XVI

BOOT TRAIL



QUINN was dealing faro when Laredo handed him Rosy's note. The gambler put it in his pocket and played a few minutes longer, then called a house-man to take over the table. This was allowed in the afternoon when gambling was slack. Quinn went to a corner of the bar, ordered a beer and read the note. He already had half a notion to take the afternoon off and this decided him. He'd go get a shave and a bath, then hunt Winters up and arrange a game for tonight that would keep him away from Mary.

He got his hat and left the Free Throw, heading for Sam's place, the only place in town where a man could get a bath in hot water. He entered the shop and found Winters stretched out in the single barber chair getting a shave. One other customer was waiting and Quinn took a seat.

Winters saw him and raised a careless hand in greeting. "Hullo, Quinn. How'd they pry you away from that faro table?"

"I took the afternoon off," Quinn said. "I'm getting too rich."

Winters laughed easily. "I was hoping you'd be there this afternoon. I was coming in and take a heap of money away from you."

Something in Quinn's mind told him to be cautious. "I never turn down a game," he said quietly.

"Then you'll be at the table in an hour or so?"

"If you want me to."

"Good. I'll bust you and your bank today. I feel lucky."

Quinn smiled and said nothing. He waited a moment, then stood up. "I'll be back later, Sam, when I don't have to wait."

Sam's black face creased into a grin and he nodded. Quinn left the shop and headed up the street. Something had jogged his curiosity and he was going to satisfy it. Last night was the first night since Quinn had been working in the Free Throw that Winters hadn't come in and lost money. To Quinn, that meant one thing: Winters was strapped at last. But now, fresh and confident, Winters had boasted about breaking the bank. Evidently, he had money enough to throw away again.

Quinn went into the hardware store, one corner of which was walled up into a large room which was the post-office. Murphy, the hardware man, was behind the wicket when Quinn approached it.

"Hello, Murph," Quinn greeted him.

"Has the mail for the Turner spread been called for yet?"

The store-owner looked up at the rows of pigeon-holes.

"No. Winters come in and got his mail, but he never took the rest of it. Why?"

"I just wondered if I'd have time to get a note out there. Thanks," Quinn said.

On the street again, he headed for the bank. He had come to a decision about Winters at last. According to Murphy, Mary Winters had not received the money he had mailed her anonymously the night before, so she had not given Winters the money he now had. And yet he had money. Twenty-four hours ago he was broke. Where was it coming from?

He entered the bank and asked for Pearson.

"The president? Yes, sir. One moment," the clerk said, and walked forward to the frosted-glass cage. He returned in a half minute.

"He's busy," the clerk said shortly.

Quinn snorted, swung open the gate and strode past the clerk to the office door marked "Private." He swung it open brusquely. Pearson was seated at a flat desk, pencil in hand. Looking up and seeing Quinn close the door, he frowned.

"Didn't my clerk tell you I am busy?" he asked coldly.

"So am I," Quinn retorted.

He sat on the desk, reached in his bill-fold and drew out a card which he flipped carelessly on the desk in front of Pearson. The banker studied the card and his rather stern features settled into more genial lines. He leaned back in his chair and nodded.

"I see," he said. His eyes traveled shrewdly, searchingly over Quinn, and the beginnings of a smile creased his face. "What can I do for you, Mr. Quinn?"

"I want to know about Winters, Mr.

Theodore Winters," Quinn said without preliminaries.

Pearson's forehead puckered and he looked out of the window at the top half of the Free Throw across the street. "Winters. Yes. He married Mary Turner, Dick Turner's daughter, didn't he?" It was less a question than a statement, as if he were thinking out loud. "What about him?"

"Does he bank here? I'd like to take a look at his account if he does."

"Certainly." Pearson rang a bell which lay at the corner of his desk and a moment later the clerk opened the door cautiously.

"See if we have a Mr. Theodore Winters banking here," Pearson ordered. "If we have, bring me his account."

The clerk disappeared and Pearson settled back in his chair again. "Very interesting work you're in, Quinn," he commented pleasantly.

"So-so," Quinn admitted. As far as he was concerned the conversation was finished.

The clerk returned with a sheet of loose-leaf paper which he handed to Pearson, who, in turn, handed it to Quinn. The gambler scanned it swiftly.

"He banked twenty-five a week for three months, then stopped. That was two years ago." Quinn put down the account sheet. "He was married about that time, wasn't he?"

"Some time around there," the banker said.

Quinn rose. "Much obliged, Pearson. I'd appreciate it if this"—he tapped his billfold—"didn't get around."

"I understand perfectly," Pearson said.



OUTSIDE again, Quinn hesitated a moment, then walked across to the Free Throw. He knew a little more now, anyway—knew that Winters didn't have any money in the bank and hadn't had

any for two years, so that wasn't where he got it.

Quinn strolled through the main room to the dance-hall beyond. There was a small bar here to serve the dance-hall patrons and a door behind this bar opened into the aisle behind the bar in the main room. He strolled behind the dance-hall bar and gossiped with the bartender. He could look into the gambling-room from where he sat and still not be seen by any one in the main room.

He had idled away a half hour this way before he saw Winters come in, look around the room and walk over to the faro table. He began playing. Occasionally, he would look around, as if searching for some one, and Quinn smiled. The gambler stood in the doorway and caught the eye of one of the house men, who came over.

"Mix around at Joe's table and see how big Winters' roll is, will you, Tom? Do you know him?"

The house man nodded and left. In five minutes he was back to report.

"He's got a wad so big he can't get it in his bill-fold."

"Thanks."

Quinn left by the side door of the dance hall, rounded the corner and walked down toward the station. At a shoe shop a few doors below the bank, he entered and was waited upon by a near-sighted and be-aproned old German.

"Anybody called for a pair of ridin' boots during the last hour, Dad?" he asked him.

"Blendy," the German said. "Wass dey yours?"

"No. Not half-boots, not cowboy boots. I mean riding boots, army boots," Quinn corrected himself.

The old German shook his head. "Only dey wear dese dancig bumps here dey gall gow-boy boots."

"Is there another shoe store in town?" Quinn asked.

The old German puffed out his cheeks.

"Dere iss a man from me four doors down who sess he rebairs boots. Dey are from cartboard and wallpaper paste made, and mit stove polish colored."

Quinn thanked him, suppressing a smile, and went five doors down the street to the other boot shop. He asked the same question of an old Mexican who assured him fluently that he had not seen such a pair of boots since he fought in the Mexican army and, God willing, he never wanted to again.

Outside again, Quinn rolled a cigarette and crossed the street to the barber-shop where he had seen Winters. Sam, the negro, was seated in an empty chair, half drowsing. He got up immediately when Quinn entered, a broad grin on his face.

"No. I don't want anything, Sam," Quinn assured him. "Where's Winters' room?" The question was asked casually, lazily.

A slight change came over the negro's face, a mere flicker of the eyes.

"Winters? Who's 'at, boss?"

"The gent you were shaving when I was in here a while back," Quinn said.

"He lives on a ranch, don't he?" Sam asked.

"He lives here," Quinn said quietly. "Better show me his room, Sam, and save yourself trouble."

The negro's mouth gaped open. "Here? He don't live here, boss. No one lives heah but me an' the missus. Upstairs." He pointed a black finger to the ceiling.

"He had slippers on, Sam. Men don't travel this country with slippers," Quinn said.

"Yassuh. Them's mine Ah give him to wear. His boots was pretty thin and he ast me to send 'em out an' git fixed while Ah was barberin' him."

"Where'd you send them?"

"That old Dutchman fella'," Sam replied glibly.

"I asked there, Sam," Quinn said pa-

tiently. "He hasn't had any ridin' boots brought in today."

Sam blinked. "Well now, ah sent 'em out by that littlest kid of mine. Mebbe he took 'em over to Garcia's."

"I asked there too. He hasn't seen boots like that since he was in the Mexican army."

The negro fidgeted nervously, settling into a stubborn silence.

"Better come across, Sam," Quinn said. "It'll save you trouble."

"Ah don' know nothin' about it, Boss." Sam said sullenly.

Quinn regarded the negro dreamily. "Sam, where did you come from?"

"Texas, Boss."

"Then you've seen a bunch of hard-cases hurrah the town, haven't you?"

"Yassuh. Too many times," the negro answered.

Quinn's hand flicked to his holster, nosed up a gun from his hip. It exploded and a spider web of shivered glass surrounded a black hole in Sam's biggest mirror.

"Did you ever see one hurrah a colored man's barber-shop, Sam?" Quinn asked softly. "Think before you answer. I'll bet Winters hasn't paid you your room rent yet. I'll shoot up your shop, Sam—maybe you too, and get nothin' out of it but a fine." Paused, he regarded the black man with a slow inscrutable smile, extending in his other hand a ten-dollar bill. "What about it?"

Sam's hand reached slowly for the bill. "You go upstairs and turn to the right. It's the back room. Ah ain't got no key," he said.

Quinn swung open the loading gate on his Colt's, shucked out the shells and threw the gun to Sam. "If anybody's curious about that shot, tell 'em you were cleanin' the gun."

He disappeared through the door in the rear, found the stairs to his left and mounted them. The door to the single room in the rear was locked, as he had

suspected. He put his shoulder to the door and broke the lock.

Shutting the door behind him, he looked around the room. It was a mean affair, mussed blankets on a rickety cot, a sagging dresser, a dirty ragged rug on the floor; and a wash-bowl and pitcher on an up-ended soap box comprised the furniture of the room, all lighted by a single small window so dirty the room was almost dark.

Quinn's experienced eye noted a shoe-box that was used as a wastebasket. It was full. That would come later if nothing turned up.

His examination of the room was thorough, starting with the dresser which revealed nothing but some soiled shirts and towels, and ending with the rug. Nothing.

"The wastebasket it is," he muttered. He dumped the contents of the shoe-box on the floor near a window and began to sort out and smooth the crumpled pieces of paper. Half way through, he rose with a paper in his hand and went closer to the window.

The letter was sent from a well-known smelting company in Tucson dated two days ago. Its message was brief.

Enclosed are banknotes as you always direct with your shipments, \$893.00 in payment for twenty-seven ounces of gold, quoted at the current market, refining costs deducted.

Quinn let the paper slip from his hands. "So that's it. Gold," he muttered. He plucked his lower lip thoughtfully, his forehead wrinkled in a frown. Picking up the letter, he reread it.

"As you always direct"—means that isn't the first shipment he's made." He shrugged. "Well, that's a clue. Not mine, though. Maybe Rand would like to know that."

Putting the paper in his pocket, he glanced around the room. Cigarettes littered the floor and rug, even the dresser top. Quinn lighted a match, touched off

the paper in the shoe-box and waited for it to burn down, careful to see that nothing else in the room caught fire. Finished, he closed the door behind him and went downstairs.

Sam was waiting, his face sweating. "Boss, what am Ah goin' to tell Mistuh Wintuhs when he comes in? Who am Ah goin' to say broke that lock?"

"I took care of that, Sam," Quinn told him. "I set the paper in the wastebasket on fire, then put it out. Tell Wintuhs you smelled smoke and had to break down the door to put out the fire."

Sam grinned happily. "Yassuh. He's the smokinest man Ah ever seed. Ah reckon he'll believe that."

Quinn gave Sam another ten. "Buy a new mirror, Sam. And just forget that I was ever in here."

"Ah ain't even likely to want to remember that, Boss," Sam said fervently.

CHAPTER XVII

DEATH IN THE CANYON



WHEN they woke Dave it was by sticking a gun in his midriff.

"You got the hobbles off you. Come on," Reilly grunted.

Dave was a little weak from hunger as he rose to his feet, and his hand was stiff and throbbing, like a raw nerve. Lew and Reilly escorted him out to the table, where Sayres was waiting with a rope, a thin smile on his face.

"You're goin' to take a trip, Turner," Sayres said. "Put out your hands."

"I heard it," Dave said quietly, as he extended his hands to be bound.

As Sayres reached out, Dave lunged for his throat, wrapping his long fingers around it, his thumbs at the windpipe. Sayres slid off the table, clutching with his big hands at Dave's wrists as Dave felt a skull-shattering blow on his head. He held on doggedly, feeling another blow on the other side of his head, and

yet another. As he sank into unconsciousness, he put every ounce of effort into the vise of his hands, feeling remotely the soft flesh give and swell under them.

It was daylight when he regained his senses, brought back by the steady jogging of his horse. He realized his head was lolling from side to side, his face in the mane of his horse. He could feel blood caked on his face, and his head throbbed maddeningly. About to look up, he suddenly checked himself. Around the saddle-horn his wrists were laced tightly and his hands were numb from the shut-off circulation.

Raising his eyes he could see through a screen of blood-matted hair that a horseman was leading the horse he was riding. Behind him he could hear the rhythmical clapping of a second horse. It was Lew ahead. They were threading their way through a broken, up-ended country, barren of any growth save an occasional piñon and a hardy yucca. It was a desert of rocks, jagged, gaunt, stark and sun-seared. The sun was beating down unmercifully on his head, and he felt as if his skull were a smashed egg, held together only by his hair.

Relaxing, he let his body sway loosely, as if he were still unconscious, and pulled his thoughts together as best he could. He dimly realized that he was mounted on his own horse and he fondly imagined the sturdy little beast was stepping lightly, trying to make it easier for him.

He knew the horse had not been unsaddled since yesterday, for it quivered its skin continually, as if to drive off the irritation of the wet saddle-blanket. Hanging his head a little, Dave looked beneath his arm and saw that his slicker, with the sheriff's gun inside, was still behind the cantle. A lot of good it would do him, he thought bitterly, manacled as he was, like a beef led to slaughter.

Reilly's thin whistling stopped sud-

denly and he called to Lew. The leader drew up and Dave's horse stopped willingly.

"Give us a drink," Reilly called.

Dave, slumped over his horse's neck, heard him dismount and the gravel crunch as he walked up to Lew.

"God, but I'm dry," Reilly said. He drank noisily from Lew's canteen.

"Reckon that jasper is alive?" Lew asked.

"I dunno. I been watchin' him and he acks just like he was dead. Rolls around on that saddle until you'd think he'd tip that damn nag over."

"Take a look," Lew said.

Reilly walked back and, seizing Dave's forelock, yanked his head up off the horse's neck. He shuttered up Dave's eyelid, saw the eye gazing blankly into space, then let his head flop back. He felt his chest too.

"He's alive, all right," Reilly grunted. "Damned if I know why, though. I slugged that skull of his till my arm was tired and he still hung on to Sayres."

Lew laughed shortly. "That kickin' Sayres give him didn't help much."

Reilly laughed too. "God, but wasn't Sayres mad? I bet he won't git a clean lungful of air for three weeks." Dave heard him spit. "Say, Lew. Why the hell are we ridin' over to Mimbres canyon when all we got to do is stick a gun in his ear, dump him off here and lie in the shade for a couple of hours?"

Lew's answer was prompt. "Sayres said dump him over there and start a rock slide. If we leave him here, some ranny might blunder onto him and know him and we'd have to jump the country sure as hell."

"Hell," Reilly scoffed. "Who comes up this way?"

"You can't tell," Lew insisted. "Mebbe a posse after that gal. Mebbe some jasper cuttin' signs for some strayed beef from over north. Anybody spots buz-

zards, they'll take a *pasear* over here to see what's the bait. Huh-uh. We better do it."

"It don't make sense," Reilly insisted.

"You seen how bad Sayres can get,"

Lew told him significantly. "If he ever found out we never took this ranny to Mimbres, I reckon I'd hit the grit and ride for a week. And I ain't smart, but I know when I got a good thing. Not me. If you ain't hankerin' to sweat a few hours more, I'll take him myself."

"I'll go," Reilly growled.

"Besides, you git back too soon and Sayres'll know we ain't been to Mimbres. Reckon we better ride on."

Reilly growled something and walked back to his horse. They started out again. Dave opened his eyes, feeling sick. If he hadn't known before that they were going to kill him, he was sure of it now. And Mary

back there alone with those killers. He tried desperately to think of a way of escape, but he was helpless and sick. He could not even struggle to free his hands or Reilly would notice it and shoot him in the back. Besides, it would do no good, for the reins of his horse were tied together, looped over the horse's head and fastened to a long rope which trailed from Lew's hand.



A HIGH, jagged-edged hogback rose before them and Lew nosed his horse into the trail that ascended its side.

The trail was narrow; to the left there was a sheer wall, to the right a long talus or windrift that sloped abruptly to the canyon bottom three hundred feet below. Lew looked back and hauled up the rope a little, so as to bring Dave's horse closer to him. He held the lead rope in his left hand, next the wall.

"Wonder now, is that hoss spooky?" Lew asked. "If he is I reckon I'll let this rope go and you drive him up."

"Naw. He's dead on his feet," Reilly replied.

Lew said: "I hope so," and swung up into the sharply ascending rocky trail which was less than three feet wide.

Suddenly, Dave stiffened and smiled grimly through cracked lips.

"Maybe it'll work," he told himself. "The worst I can do is break my neck and that's better than gettin' shot in the ear and buried under a mountain."

He sagged loosely in the saddle, head bent down as his horse swung into the ascent. The steepness of the hill raised the horse's forequarters, letting Dave's sagging head slip down on the shoulders. He rode low this way for perhaps



three minutes, letting Reilly become accustomed to it.

The three horses made their way cautiously up the steep trail making quick-footed recoveries as they slipped on pebbles.

Dave, his head hanging along his horse's neck between the wall and the horse, could not see how steep the grade on the other side was. He did not want to. Time enough to worry about that later.

"Look at that *hombre*, Lew," Reilly called. "Ten more minutes and the horse'll be ridin' him."

Lew glanced back briefly and grunted. His attention was taken up with the trail ahead of him.

Dave steeled himself. "Here goes, old horse. Sorry." And he sunk his teeth in the horse's withers, ripping away a large piece of skin. Electrified by the searing pain in its neck, the horse lunged and let out a shrieking whinny. Dave bit again, savagely.

On that narrow ledge, the horse, frantic with fright and pain, started to pitch. Lew's efforts to snub him with the rope were savage but fruitless. The horse reared back, then landed in a stiff-legged hump, and started to pitch in earnest, ears back.

"He's wild!" Reilly yelled. "Let go and ride up."

The pitching seemed to shake Dave into a thousand splintery fragments of bone as he tried still to keep the appearance of being relaxed. His head snapped back sickeningly, then whipped forward as if it were going to fly off his neck. His wrists, tied to the saddle-horn, were almost snapped in two. Whenever he could, he ground his knee into the raw place where he had torn the skin loose with his teeth. Gently, but firmly, he pressed his left knee against the spot, hoping that reaction from training added to the pain would swing the horse to the right.

Crazed with pain, the horse jarred down stiff-legged again, humped its back for another pitch and Dave savagely rubbed the raw flesh. Half-way up in its arc, the horse started a sunfish, and when it landed Dave felt as if he were going to be ripped out of the saddle with the sudden fall.

The horse had gone over the trail edge.

With Dave's weight on its back, the horse started to plummet down the steep slope, its four legs spread in a futile effort to check its speed. Dimly, Dave realized that in the quick descent, Lew, who had doggedly held to the rope trying to fight the horse down, had been swept from his saddle by the swift yank on it.

Dave heard a shot behind him and felt the horse shudder as if hit. Desperately, he guided the horse with his knees as best he could while behind him he could hear the gathering rumble of the rock and dirt slide he had started. The canyon bottom seemed to be rising steadily and swiftly to meet them. He hoped savagely that the horse would be able to pull out of the slide without help from the reins as he worked excitedly to free his wrists.

"Steady, boy," he called to the horse.

The last fifty feet of the slope was almost straight. Dave leaned as far back as he could in the saddle, careless of what Reilly and Lew might think.

The horse hit the arroyo bottom, legs spread, with an impact that was stunning. It staggered, stumbled a few steps, then fighting madly, it came out of it and trotted clear of the oncoming avalanche. Dave guided it behind a huge sheltering boulder.

"Steady, steady," he muttered soothingly and part of his calm was communicated to the horse, who stopped, trembling.

He had to be quick. Closing his eyes and clamping his jaws, he pulled savagely at the thongs binding his wrists to

the saddle horn. A sickening rip of skin and one hand was free. Soon the other was able to help him as he turned in his saddle, ears primed for pursuit, and struggled with blood-dripping hands to free his slicker. Hands and fingers were numb, aching. He did not try to free his feet; they would be on him before he succeeded.

The slicker free, Dave unrolled it swiftly and found the gun Hank had given him. Then, reaching down and seizing the bridle as reins, he spurred the horse slowly from behind the rock, looking up at the trail. A glance told the story. Both men were gingerly picking their way down the trail and were now close to the bottom. They had had to climb to the top before they could turn around. A deep furrow was plowed down the talus where Dave's horse had slid. A distance away from it was another furrow, smaller, where Lew had been dragged from his horse and had fought his way back up the slope again.

"Good fellow," Dave whispered, stroking the neck of the trembling horse and backing it gently behind the rock again. He massaged his fingers, wet with streaming blood, and listened for the sound of horses in the canyon bed.

They were coming, both cursing savagely, at a gallop. Dave pulled his roan close in to the rock and balanced his gun lightly in his bloody palm, his eyes thin, flinty slits in his face.

Lew was the first to charge by, and Dave yelled. Reilly, close on Lew's heels, lunged into sight, already checking his horse, his hands whipping to his guns.

Dave coolly wheeled his horse broadside, in a high arc, stooping low over its neck as his gun dropped down slowly, hesitated, crashed and bucked up jarringly. Reilly screamed as he catapulted from the saddle across his horse's neck and to the ground, but Dave did not see him.

Lew's gun was clear, flashing its bright steel wink in the sunshine as it traveled up across his body. Dave deliberately fanned every shell in his gun at Lew's side. The first shot seemed to stand the outlaw up in his stirrups, but did not stop the ascending gun. The second knocked his leg free so that it drew up to his stomach in a gesture of pain. The third snapped his head to one side and seemed to melt him off the saddle and sprawl him quietly between the feet of his horse in the dust, dead.

Dave's gun sank slowly and the bleak, twisted smile on his face faded.

"Two," he muttered thickly. Spurring his horse over, he looked down at the two men. Lew was dead, drilled through the head. Reilly's mouth was a fountain of welling blood and Dave knew he was dying, if not dead. He stared at the men dully, sunk in a stupor of pain and fatigue and thirst.

He shook himself. This couldn't go on: he'd have to pull himself together. The first thing to do was to free himself of the saddle. The knots to the ropes were under the horse's belly where he could not reach them; so, loading his gun again, he shoved the muzzle of his Colt's against the rope beside his foot and cut it with a shot.

Dismounted, he was so weak his legs gave way under him.

"I've got to drink," he thought dazedly, sitting on the ground. Crawling over to Lew's horse, he pulled himself up by the stirrup and slung the canteen from the saddle horn. After the first slow drink he paused, then took a deep draught, which strengthened him. Then he lay down in the shade of the rock, tore the slicker into strips and, after washing his wounds, bound them. He found he could move his fingers easily, though with much pain.

"That's all I want," he told himself. "Just so I can hold a gun."



SEATED by the rock, he considered his course. They had Mary there at the cabin and had been careful to remove him before she got there. God knows what this gang of renegades would do to her: he could not let himself think of it. There was only one thing to do. Go back and get her, selling his life as dearly as possible. His thoughts of the ranch were secondary now. If he was alive, no man would dare to claim the D Bar T, deed or no deed.

He tried walking and found that the water had given him a degree of strength. Collecting the guns and belts of the two dead men, he tested the six-guns for their balance. Lew's suited him best and he strapped them on. Reilly's guns and his own borrowed one he rolled up in what was left of his slicker and strapped on his saddle.

He considered the two dead men. They could not be left for buzzards and coyotes to pick, even if they did deserve it. He pulled them over a way to the opposite side of the canyon so that cloudbursts sweeping the canyon floor would not dig them up. Laying them side by side, he piled a cairn of stones over them. When he was finished, he looked at the grave and laughed grimly.

"That's more than you would have done for me, gents, but I reckon you deserve it."

He turned to the horses standing hip-shot in the sun. Dave mounted Lew's pinto and cut Reilly's horse across the rump with his rope. Dave had no idea where the cabin lay, but he knew if given their heads the horses would take for it.

Then he settled down into steady riding, keeping his eyes and ears alert, riding close to Reilly's horse. His own mount followed wearily behind.

Dave tried to figure out some plan of rescuing Mary. He could not guess how many men would be at the cabin. He judged he would get there in mid-after-

noon. How would he approach? The dark of the night previous and his unconsciousness of this morning had prevented him getting any idea of how the place was situated. He would have to wait, trusting to luck.

The first two hours he relaxed, letting the riding wear out the stiffness of his body. His ribs ached and he knew without feeling that some of them were broken.

As the time went on, he became more wary and moved closer to the lead horse, watching it. When he heard it whinny and saw it increase its pace, he spurred his horse and headed it off.

Dismounting, he halted the horses to the ground, laying heavy rocks on their reins. He looked around. Ahead of him, the land rose, broken and rocky, to the lip of a ridge.

Dave took a lariat from the saddle and made his way up the hill. On the ridge, he squatted inconspicuously by a boulder and looked the country over. There, a little to the south of him, perhaps a half mile away, lay the cabin in a deep pocket of the valley. It was a log affair with log outbuildings. Beyond them, the country stretched in parallel rocky ridges to the mountains, perhaps six miles away. The outlaws had chosen their hideout wisely, Dave thought. Unless a man was on one of the rustler's homing horses, like himself, he could wander the bad-lands for years and only by accident stumble on the place tucked away in the hills.

There was a low ridge of gaunt rock just behind the buildings and a peninsula of rock jutting out from it at right angles. The outbuildings nestled in the lee of this rocky finger.

"I'll have to get close," he thought; "close enough to see if I can set the barn on fire, anything to draw them out of the house."

He worked his way down to the low ridge, keeping in the shelter of the rocks as much as possible, until he had reached



the finger of rock. He wormed his way out on this almost to the end, then rose and surveyed the place. The back of the cabin faced him, perhaps forty yards off. It was roughly rectangular, but the storeroom addition placed a little off center to the rear destroyed the symmetry and also made windows impossible. Its low roof sloped up to the roof of the cabin proper.

Directly below Dave lay the barn nestled snugly against the rock out of the wind. In the corral adjoining it, he counted six horses, but Mary's was not among them. He calculated swiftly how many men were apt to be at the house.

"Sayres sure. Cassidy will stay at the pass on the lookout for a posse. Fat may be back. He probably took two men to get Mary. That will be four at least."

Watching the house for a long minute and seeing no signs of life, he decided that no one was likely to come out and surprise him.

He looped the lariat around a point of rock, tested it, then let himself down

hand over hand the twenty feet to the barn roof. Flipping the rope loose, he let himself down to the ground behind the barn.

Edging his head around the corner of the barn, he made a more careful examination of the shack. He could see the padlock gleaming on the back door of the addition, inside of which was Mary, bound and helpless probably. If he rescued her, it would have to be by the front entrance. He drew back thoughtfully, making his way around to the corral and climbing through the bars. The horses watched him closely, their mild unblinking eyes incurious and trustful. He let himself in the stable door and looked around.

Now that he was here a dislike for setting the barn afire came over him. It was a rancher's distaste for the waste of property, feed, saddles and labor. But some way, somehow, he had to get at least two or three of the men out of the house.

His eyes roved the barn, finally set-

ting on a bearskin lying dusty and neglected in a far corner under some empty sacks. A plan formed slowly in his mind and he decided to try it.

Going through the stable door out into the corral again, he hugged the barn wall sheltered from sight of the house and moved toward the corral gate, which consisted of loose poles. Keeping a careful eye on the house, he removed the poles. The horses watched him, silently wondering at his strange actions.

In the barn again, Dave opened the huge barn door a foot or so. He picked up the bearskin and, after taking a last look at the house, went to the stable door.

He sailed the bearskin out into the middle of the corral, then dodged back in the barn and out the door, running as quietly as he could for the back of the addition.

The horses, smelling the bearskin, seeing it sail of itself out into their midst, milled wildly from it, finally boiling out the gate in a stampede.

"It's kill or die now," Dave muttered to himself as he watched them go.

The horses had fled past the south end of the house, heading down a narrow canyon to the east. Dave crawled softly around the north end of the shack, bending low before the one window in that end. At the corner he stopped and listened.



HE HEARD chairs scrape, feet pounding and a voice from the door.

"Goddlemighty, it's them horses scatterin'. Who left that corral gate down?"

Dave did not recognize this voice, but he did the voice that answered. It was Sayres.

"You did, Ed, damn you! You were the last one in."

"But I never," Ed protested vehemently.

"Shut up and go round 'em up,"

Sayres ordered. "You help him too, Lafe."

"But we ain't got a horse left in the corral," Ed protested.

"They'll run themselves out," Sayres said. "My horse answers to a whistle anyway. Get along."

Dave edged his head around the corner of the house in time to see two men he didn't recognize file out and head down the canyon afoot.

He gave them time to get out of sight among the rocks, then he edged around the front door on his hands and knees, listening. He heard the conversation between two men, one of them Sayres, as it seeped past the closed door.

"Fat'll send word where the posse's headin' for. If they come down the valley, we can spot 'em. If they come up behind, Fat'll know. He'll have some one in the posse, don't you worry. If they crowd us, we better take the gal back to the line camp in the timber, north. They'll hunt a year before they kick up that place."

"She's a pretty gal," the second voice said suggestively.

"Ain't she, though?" Sayres drawled.

Dave lost the rest. A violent surge of rage blinded him momentarily. He straightened up and swung the door open.

Both men were seated at one end of the table, a bottle before them. They looked up to see a tall, lean, blood-spattered man standing in the door, leaning a little forward on the balls of his feet, bloody hands loose at his sides.

"Fill your hand, Sayres!" Dave drawled in a low voice, almost a whisper.

But Sayres had already started. And so had Dave and so had the stranger.

In the least part of a second Dave divined what Sayres was going to do. Seated, the outlaw could not get at his guns. He made a leap to place himself behind the stranger, his hands clawing at his guns. Dave's shot was quick,

hasty, hardly allowing time for his Colt's to clear leather. The shot caught Sayres in the side and pitched him into the stranger who was half out of the chair. The impact sprawled them both on the floor. Then Dave's rage broke as, feet planted solidly to meet any lead that reached him, he emptied his guns, the other nine shots, into the writhing mass of arms, legs and bodies that was Sayres and the stranger. Only one shot came from that mass and it sang harmlessly into the ceiling.

A feeling of sickness and weariness and disgust enveloped Dave as he let his gun sag, and waited while the blanket of smoke drifted away from him to the door. He felt weak as water and he took two steps forward to lean on the table. Sayres lay sprawled over the upset chair, face down, his guns fallen out of his lifeless grip onto the floor, one side of his shirt cut to ribbons and slowly soaking up blood like a blotter. The stranger lay peacefully on his back, gunless hands crossed on his chest.

Dave shook himself. He shucked cartridges into his guns as he strode across the room to the padlocked door.

"Mary!" he called.

There was a sort of muffled cry for an answer and Dave shot the lock off. He knew the two men after the horses would have heard the shots and would probably be running back now, but it was important that Mary be freed so she could escape while he held them off.

Once in the dark room, he made out a figure sitting tensely on the cot, a sack over her head. Dave fumbled with the strings and finally yanked the sack off.

Dorsey Hammond looked up at him with frightened, frantic eyes.

"Dave!" she said.

She was in his arms sobbing before he could recover from his surprise. She wept bitterly, her whole body shaking as Dave held her closely, pity welling up in his heart. At last he held her from him and shook her gently.

"Dorsey. Mary isn't here?"

"N-n-no. I don't think so."

"Who has the keys to the leg irons? Quick! We've got to hurry."

"I don't know their names, but it's the boss."

"Sit down," Dave snapped. "I'll be back in a minute."

He ran over to Sayres, rolled the body over and fumbled through the pockets. His hands paused and he listened, hearing the pounding of running feet. Slowly, his hand left Sayres and settled to his gun-butt, his eyes narrowing. The running ceased, and a man stepped through the door hesitantly, guns already drawn, his eyes swiftly taking in the scene. Dave was behind the table, crouched by Sayres, but the newcomer saw him, for he went into action, guns blazing. Dave laughed silently and whipped a shot under the table where the man's legs were visible. Another and another he sent at the legs while he crouched behind Sayres' body, using it as a parapet. The outlaw sagged to his knees, still blazing away blindly.

Dave shot just once more and the man pitched forward on his face, slowly straightening his knees into a spasmodic sprawl and lay quiet. Dave waited for the second man, silently loading his gun as he watched the door. Suddenly, a window shattered and Dave laughed.

The second outlaw had chosen wisely. He was fortified up behind a rock sixty yards in front of the house in the middle of the dry wash.

Dave found the keys on Sayres and returned to Dorsey, who, white and trembling, had witnessed through the open door the duel with the outlaw.

"Are you hurt?" she whispered.

"No." Dave stooped to unlock the leg-irons. "I'm sorry about that door. I should've shut it. It's been a bloody day."

His white, drawn face looked up into hers and she nodded dumbly, the look of horror still on her face.

"We kill coyotes because they kill our cattle," Dave said softly, "And we have to kill these *hombres*, or they'll kill us."

"I know."

"No, you don't," Dave said, "but you will when you understand. It's just bloody and cruel."

"Do you feel that way about it too?" Dorsey asked wonderingly.

"More than you," Dave answered. "More because I'm the one that's got to kill and kill," he added grimly.

"Then this isn't the end?" she asked.

Dave shook his head grimly. The outlaw in front of the cabin was still to be accounted for, although now he had ceased shooting.

Dorsey stood up, free once more. She shuddered.

"Can we get away?"

Dave nodded. He stepped to the back door of the addition and shot the lock off. Then he turned to Dorsey.

"Step through here and wait for me outside."

"What are you going to do?"

"A dirty job," Dave said slowly, "but a decent one, I reckon, at that. I'm goin' to fire the place."



HIS eyes were cold and flinty and Dorsey looked away from him. When she had stepped outside Dave went into the main room and scattered lamp oil on the floor and blankets. Then he touched it off and stepped outside to Dorsey as the first few wisps of smoke swept out the door and up into the bright sunshine.

"That *hombre* out front has only got a six-gun," Dave said. "He can't hit us—I don't think he can even see us. Make a run for the barn and I'll follow you."

"But—" she began, then closed her mouth.

Dave watched her run to the barn. He leaned against the wall thinking. Should he leave the place with the one

outlaw alive, who would be sure to spread the word? And yet the man did not know that it was Dave who had caused the shooting. All the men who had seen him were dead in the burning house. He could still get away without being identified. What did it matter if this man carried the word to town of the shooting and burning? He would carry along with it the news that Dave had been half killed in a fight and buried in Mimbres canyon. He would not wait for the return of Lew and Reilly before carrying the word to Fat.

His reverie was interrupted by a shout from the barn.

"Look out! Dave."

Dave dropped on his face as a shot blazed from the corner of the cabin. He landed on his stomach, rolling on his side, his free arm whipping out his gun. Only the edge of a hatbrim and a gun showed, but Dave emptied his gun at them as he watched the other gun explode. He felt a hot searing pain in his arm and then the shooting ceased. He leaped to his feet, lunged for the shelter of the cabin as he drew his other gun.

Flattening himself against the wall, he waited. No more shots came and he made his way cautiously to the corner. He poked his gun barrel around it to see if it would draw a shot but it didn't. He swung out, gun ready, and saw the outlaw kneeling, his guns resting idly on his knees, leaning against the wall as if asleep. Dave lifted his hat and saw a neat purple hole just above his right eyebrow. The man had died like a tired child.

Dave shuddered and looked away. In the course of a few hours he had made himself a killer six times over. He shrugged wearily, and dragged the body into the burning house.

In the barn Dorsey was waiting, sitting on the floor. Her face was in her hands and she was sobbing quietly when Dave entered. He stood above her awkwardly, wondering what to say.

"I reckon we better hightail it," he said finally, and added slowly, "I'm sorry about that, but there was no other way out."

Dorsey stood up suddenly and made an effort to control herself.

"Take me home, please," her voice was low and toneless and her eyes lowered.

Dave remembered the stinging scorn in her voice when he had seen her in Dr. Fullerton's. He started to speak but the words died. "They're all dead," he said soberly. "We'll get the horses."

"Where are they?"

"About a mile from here, just over the lip of this hogsback. Can you walk it?"

"Yes, I—" Dorsey at last lifted her eyes to his set white face. "You're hit," she cried. "Are you—"

"I forgot," Dave answered wearily. The last shot of the outlaw had seared his upper arm. Dorsey bandaged it expertly while he watched her trying to read the thoughts back of her sombre eyes.

"How did you get here?" he asked. "I heard 'em talk about a girl and I thought it was Mary."

They left the buildings and started slowly up the hogsback.

"I went home a little after dark, dead tired. I'd been up all the night before. I put Pancho in the stable and went in the house. In the kitchen a man grabbed me and told me not to make a noise. There were two of them and one asked the other if they'd left the note. Then they put a sack over my head and tied

me on my horse and we rode all night, it seemed. They treated me all right." She looked at Dave, her eyes puzzled. "What's this all about? How long is this madness going to go on?"

"I dunno," Dave answered. "I was forced to sign over my half of our ranch to the jasper named Crowell."

"Crowell? The man you and dad are looking for? The one behind the dynamiting?"

"Yeah," Dave nodded. "I thought he was behind it but there's some one else. Some one they all call boss. He's payin' Crowell for gettin' the ranch an' mine: Sayres and his gang for the dynamitin'—" A wave of anger swept over Dave as he recalled all the suffering that had been caused. "I'm goin' to get out of here an' track him down like—"

"Yes, that's your way, isn't it?" Dorsey's quiet voice broke in.

Dave swung around to face her. "Why, what else should I do? What would any man—" he caught himself. "Here's the horses," he said quietly.

They swung on them in silence and rode to the west. Dorsey sat straight as an Indian, her face was white and remote. Dave's thoughts were dark and bitter. He handed her a gun which she received in silence and stuck in the belt of her skirt.

"That's in case I'm not lucky enough to reach you next time," he said. They rode swiftly, each wondering what was next, and if this all hadn't happened too late to save them.

(TO BE CONCLUDED)





FIGHT IN THE DARK

by George Bruce

THE CHAMP was afraid of darkness. He was afraid of being alone. No one knew that but the Champ. When the Champ was a kid his mother invariably punished him by locking him in a dark closet. Once she forgot about him for nearly two days. Whenever the Champ thought of that he shuddered. Men who made a business of rating the courage and fighting abilities of professional fighters were agreed that the Champ had been born without the element of fear; he didn't know the meaning of the word. But the Champ knew the truth. Which explained many things for which the Champ was famous.

It explained why he was no longer the welterweight champion of the world, and why he was flat broke. It explained why he was alone, lying upon the hard surface of a rubbing table in the center of a square, whitewashed room in the basement of the Garden. A room which had no furnishings but the table and the wash-stand against the wall. A crypt lit with a single unshaded light bulb burning with a cruel glare directly above the Champ's face.

The Champ was sick. His belly muscles writhed and twisted under taut flesh. His chest heaved jerkily. His two hands, still encased in sodden, blood-smeared gloves, hung stiffly and

inertly over the sides of the table. The hands were clenched tightly.

There was a sullen trickle of red running from the corners of his mouth. The right side of his face was a purple mass with the flesh standing in bumpy ridges. There was a gash in the flesh above his right eyebrow. Both eyes were terribly swollen. The lids were closed tightly. The Champ's body under the heart was a dull red. The surface above the kidneys was shot over with a greenish-purple.

His breath whistled through tightly set teeth.

There was a complete silence in the room excepting for the Champ's tortured breathing and the far-off thump and pound of feet on the canvas-covered ring and the occasional shouting in unison of ten thousand voices.

The main event was on upstairs.

Five minutes before, the Champ had gone out of that ring feeling for the top strand of the ropes with his gloved hands, pawing for the steps with his feet. He went out as he had always gone out—walking, with his clasped gloves held high above his head in answer to the crashing ovation which roared down upon him from the steeply banked tiers of seats.

There was a grin about his smashed mouth. He staggered a little as he walked along the aisle to the exit and to the steps leading to the dressing rooms. Once or twice his hands went out and touched shoulders along the aisle, as if to steady himself. A cop had taken him by the arm and walked with him to the steps.

"You gave that guy a shellackin', Champ," the cop told him.

But the Champ knew the cop was a liar. Knew he was lying out of a desire to say something kindly.

The cop didn't know that the Champ was stone blind, that he was making his way back to the dressing room from memory—from memory which grew out of a hundred trips to and from that

ring. Down the stairs, the Champ had felt for the walls with his hands, and had counted the doors. He had stumbled through the door of his own dressing room and thrown himself down on the table.

The Champ had been mumbling to himself:

"Jeez! It's dark down here—"

He was talking to a crawling terror moving about in his soul. He was talking to himself to keep from shrieking, from pounding on the walls with his fists. He knew there was plenty of light. He just couldn't see.

He swallowed hard. His lips moved.

"Them lousy left jabs," he whispered to himself. "That's what done it—and that right cross in the ninth! But I fooled the egg. Jeez! If that guy'd knowed I couldn't see him—"

The whisper trailed away, ended in a wave of nausea which rose up from the pit of his stomach and smothered him.

He could feel the heat of the unshaded light upon his face. There was a reddish glare eating at the core of his brain. Skyrockets exploded within his head and there was a searing pain behind his eyeballs. He licked his swollen mouth with a rasping tongue. His throat was raw and his lungs seemed to be inhaling liquid flame.

"It's the swellin'," he told himself hoarsely. "Like the time Doc Marks had to slit me to get my eyes open."

He moved his hands. They came up on his chest. They moved heavily, clumsily. He covered his face with the pulpy gloves. He pressed his left thumb against his cheek and the right thumb against the eyelid. He made an attempt to force the eyelid back over the eyeball. His face went taut with the pain. The lid slid up over the swollen eye. The eyeball glared up at the light. The eyelid slipped back over the eye. And the Champ's hands beat a frenzied tattoo against his chest.

"Jeez!" said the hoarse voice from within his chest. "I can't see—nuthin'."

The crawling terror was galloping within him. His body succumbed to a nervous twitching. He sucked air through his mouth.

There was the squeak of the door opening. The Champ turned his head. He made an attempt to grin. He forced his hands to remain motionless on his sweat and blood wet chest.

A voice spoke to him. "'Lo, Champ." A hand touched his naked shoulder.

The Champ's body relaxed slightly.

"'Lo, Doc." He managed to make the words sound careless, cheerful. "Jeez! I thought you'd be getting a load of the main event. Riley, and that dinge, Miller."

The boxing commission's medical inspector was looking down at the Champ's face. His eyes were narrowed and his lips thin. He too kept his voice casual.

"That's a waltz," he said in assumed disgust. "What the hell are you doing down here — by yourself? Where's Larry?"

"Aw, he'll be along after while," said the Champ. "He bought himself a piece of Miller couple weeks ago for five grand. He must be upstairs countin' the house."

"You know better than to plunk yourself down like this," growled the Doctor. "Not a lick of sense. Steaming hot—no shower. You want to get pneumonia?"

"Pneumonia!" The Champ laughed. There was a tiny note of shrillness in the laugh. "Say, I ain't no pansy."

The Champ could feel the doctor's hands moving over his body. They seemed cool, reassuring. The panic stopped galloping in his soul. The muscles, set against the pain, softened a trifle. The doctor was wiping him off with a towel. The roughness of the towel rubbed over lacerations and burned like living flame pressed against the flesh.

"I'm just—kind of restin' a little," informed the Champ. "That mug dished

out a little more than I expected. What a left! Had it stuck in m'face all night. I couldn't get goin'."

The doctor did not answer. His touch on the battered, beaten body was almost a caress. The silence grew heavy in the room. After a while the Champ broke it.

"Hey, Doc. I'd like to get the eyes open. I can't see much. I figure they're puffed up plenty."

"Yeah," said the doc. "They're puffed up plenty."

There was a brittle laugh from the Champ's dry throat. "You'll get a gag outa this. I been layin' here thinkin' about a blind guy I know. You know the guy? He sells papers at the corner of 47th and Seventh. North side of the street."

"Yeah, I know him."

There was the tiny metallic sound of surgical instruments being taken from a bag. The Champ's body tensed. His mouth went white.

"I wonder how long the guy has been blind?" he said.

The doctor's fingers touched the eyes. A wave of pain beat against the Champ's brain.

"I'm going to slit your eyes," informed the doc. "You lie there and don't move. Understand?"

The Champ nodded. The pallor under the purple bruises transformed his face into a ghastly mask.

"Why don't you put zippers on 'em?" he laughed.

The point of the scalpel in the doc's hands disappeared into the flesh below the Champ's right eye. The Champ's body arched at the small of the back. He slipped his hands under his buttocks to hide the knotted fists. A sullen trickle of black blood drained from under the eye.

The Doc's hands moved with precise care. The knife point made an incision below the left eye. After that the doc stitched the gash over the right eye with a wickedly curved needle, and

pulled the sutures tight until the wound puckered and was closed.

The doc held a bottle under the Champ's nose. "Take a deep breath," he commanded. "Come on! Sniff."

The biting dizziness of the salts set the Champ's brain aflame.

The doctor bathed the Champ's face. He turned out the light; gave the Champ something bitter in a glass of hot water. Then he covered him over with the old, faded bathrobe the Champ always wore into the ring.

The Champ's voice became drowsy. "I'm gettin' a return match with that mug. I got him figured. I'll knock him loose from his neck."

"Sure. Sure," said the doctor soothingly. He tucked the bathrobe more carefully under the Champ's knees.

The Champ went to sleep—in the dressing room—on the bare rubbing table.



IT WAS a hot day in Williams Street. The heat swirled and eddied up from the pavement and blistered the house fronts as the Champ swung his heavy truck around the corner. There was a sudden scream, and the screech of dragging rubber over asphalt. The Champ found himself standing upon the brakes. The truck was at a standstill. The Champ was paralyzed. He could only crouch forward on the edge of his seat, staring, his foot still jammed on the brake pedal.

Something like a shadow had darted out from behind a parked car just as he had turned the corner. Then the scream, ripped from a woman's throat—and somehow the Champ had known that the shadow was a kid—under the truck.

He found himself on the street. He was under the truck. He came out with something soft and fragile in his arms. Something soft and fragile with arms and legs dangling. A woman was pawing at him, fighting for possession of

what the Champ carried, tearing at him with her nails, and screaming.

A cop came up at a trot. The Champ tried to give the thing in his arms to the cop. The cop said:

"C'm on!"

He flagged an automobile and stood on the running board. The Champ sat in the back seat. He discovered then that he was holding a boy, a kid, ten maybe. He stared at the kid's face. The face was dirty, the hair was tousled. Under the grime the kid's face was ashen.

Some one in white came down the front steps of a big building and took the boy out of the Champ's arms. The cop was asking questions, but the Champ's eyes were fixed on the doorway. More people in white wheeled out a bed on rubber wheels. They wheeled the kid into the hospital. The Champ knew it was a hospital. It smelled like a hospital.

The cop was saying angrily:

"C'm on, snap out of it, fella! What's the story?"

The Champ heard his own voice answering.

"He jumped out all of a sudden. I heard the lady yell. I stopped."

"What's yer name?" demanded the cop. He was looking at the Champ's face strangely.

The Champ looked at the cop for the first time.

"Name?" he repeated dully. "Oh, yeah. Johnny Martin. . ."

The cop cursed.

"Johnny Martin! The welterweight champion! Well, for Pete's sake!"

"It was an accident, see?" pleaded the Champ. "I never had a chance. I'm as careful as hell. Why, I wouldn't hurt a kid for all the dough in the world!"

The cop wrote a few lines in his book and snapped the cover closed. "Sure it was an accident," he nodded. "Don't take it like that. It's happenin' every minute."

The hospital door closed, and the Champ shivered.

"It ain't never happened to me before."

The cop took him by the arm.

"You go on back to Williams Street and pick up that truck of yours. No, wait! I'll go back with you. I know them people. They may be nasty. C'm on!"

There was a crowd at the corner of Williams Street. The crowd milled around the truck. A shrill voice yipped:

"There's the guy that done it!"

A woman launched herself at the Champ. The cop stepped in and grabbed the woman. He overawed the crowd about the truck.

"Go on, Champ," he ordered. "Get it the hell out of here! You'll have to hold yourself for appearance. But don't worry."

The Champ got back up on the seat and drove away. He could still hear the woman's scream. His blue shirt was stained with the kid's blood.

He took the truck back to the garage. His hands were shaking. He left it in the middle of the floor without saying a word. Then he went up to his room and sat on the edge of the bed. He stared at the wall.

After a while the telephone bell rang in the hall and the landlady knocked on the Champ's door. She was beaming.

"It's the doctor from the boxing commission, Champ."

The Champ moved out into the hall and picked up the dangling receiver. It was Doc, all right, telephoning right from the Garden. Must have been weighing in, up there.

"What the hell is the matter with you?" demanded the Doc. "Cassidy just called me up from the garage and told me you came in looking like a ghost, climbed off the seat and left the truck without saying a word."

"I killed a kid," said the Champ. His voice sounded mechanical.

There was a verbal explosion at the other end of the wire.

"You what!" demanded the Doc.

"Corner of Williams Street and Seventh Avenue. I came around the corner. The kid jumped out in the street. I hit him before I could stop."

"How the hell do you know you killed him? Did some doctor say he was dead?"

"I didn't talk to no doctor, Doc. A cop came along and we took the kid to the hospital. I figure he's dead. He feels dead."

"What hospital?" barked the voice.

"I don't know," answered the Champ miserably. "Don't ask me questions, Doc. I feel lousy. I won't never be able to drive that truck again."

The line went dead. He stood staring at the telephone for a long moment. Then he replaced the receiver and walked with heavy feet back to his room. He sat on the edge of the bed again. Thought moved ponderously through the Champ's brain. It was like water soaking through felt.

Well, that was the end of his job. After all Doc Marks had done for him! After that night up at the Garden when he slept on the rubbing table and the Doc had stayed with him the whole damned night. There was a hard lump in the Champ's throat as he thought of the Doc staying with him all night in that lousy dressing room.

Then the next day they had gone up to the specialist, and the specialist had looked at the eyes and had shrugged his shoulders while the Champ sat in a chair, unmoving, watching the specialist's face. The specialist had ignored the Champ. Maybe he thought the Champ didn't speak the same language. He talked to Doc Marks.

"You did a good bit of work here, Marks. It was necessary to relieve the pressure against the optic nerve. But I wouldn't say that the danger is past by any means. The condition has been aggravated over a long period of time because of the constant battering those eyes have taken. It's a wonder to me

he isn't blind altogether, or that he recovered his vision after the punishment those nerves took last night. He's just lucky, that's all. Next time—" And then the shrug.

The specialist had turned to the Champ.

"You understand, don't you?" he inquired. "A blow affecting the eyes—and the chances are you'll be blinded."

And the Champ, his body cold and a lead weight in his stomach, had nodded dully.

Doc Marks had steered him out the door and down to the street.

"We'll ask Cassidy for a job for you," decided Doc. "Cassidy owes me plenty of favors, and I don't consider it a favor to give a job to the welterweight champion of the world."

Doc and the rest of them always talked about it like that—as if he were still the champion.

That was a bang! The sports writers calling him the roughest, toughest fighting machine of his weight the world had ever seen. Printing long stories about the Gorman fight and the Ciotti fight and the Cummings fight, when he had won the title. Never took a backward step. Never stopped punching. Never covered up in his life. Fought 'em all—and loved it. Color—punch—drama! That was Johnny Martin, the Champ. Did his training in night clubs—spent his dough like a drunken sailor—new car every other day—and the most expensive clothes on Broadway. His friends took him for a sucker, and he laughed it off.

Twenty newspapers all saying things about Johnny Martin, the Champ, and saying them as if they were writing about his funeral. As if he was an old man, going to die.

The Champ was nearly thirty!

How in the hell could they understand about the night club business? Did anybody ever see him take a drink? No, you're damn right! Only the Champ

knew about the "night life." He had to have company. He could not stay alone. It got on his nerves. Something about turning the light off and being in the darkness gave him the jitters. Made him feel as if the darkness was coming in, closing around him! Hands reaching out for him! Grabbing at him. He had to go out and get away from it. That was why he used to give a ten-spot to every blind man he met. He was a mark for blind men. He imagined them living in the dark. In the dark, all the time!

There was a little trickle of cold sweat running down his back.

Driving a truck for Cassidy! The sports writers had praised that. The Champ knew when to hang up the leather. No cutting paper dollies for him. No hanging around the Garden entrance putting the slug on ex-pals for a sawbuck. No janitor job. Not for Johnny Martin. He might be broke flat, but he would do an honest job for honest wages. Just like he had done an honest job in the ring.

Thirty bucks a week for the honest job. But somehow it meant just as much as the thirty thousand he got for the Ciotti fight. He had never seen any of that dough.

The telephone rang again. He jumped. His hands clenched. His heart beat heavily against his ribs. He listened to the plopping of the landlady's slippers along the hallway. He heard her voice.

"Champ! It's the commission doctor again."

The Doc's voice came to him over the wire. "Get in a taxi and come down to the Post Graduate Hospital," the Doc ordered.

It was like a left hook under the heart. For a moment the Champ could not breathe nor speak.

"Aw, it isn't as bad as that," assured the Doc. "I've seen the kid. I phoned around until I found the hospital. He's banged up a little, but he's far from dead. Get down here, right away."



THE CHAMP snatched his hat from his dresser and pounded down the steps two at a time. He piled into a taxi. He raced up the steps of the Post Graduate. Doc was waiting for him in the lobby.

"I told the kid who knocked him down," smiled the Doc. "He's in there now. They're going to operate on him. He wanted to see you before they took him in. I told him I'd get you."

They were riding in an elevator, and then they were in a white-walled room and there were people in white walking around. The kid's cheeks were sucked between his jaws. He looked very frail. Somebody had washed his face and combed his hair. There was a bandage wound around the upper part of his face and head. A doctor stood at the head of the bed.

The kid moved his hand.

"Hello, Champ," he said. "Gee, is this a break! I didn't know you drove a truck! This guy tells me about it when I come to. Well, when I hear I get bumped by Johnny Martin—oh, boy! Say, I got a picture of you, Champ—one of them pictures they give away with that cereal you eat to give ya what do they call it? Stem—"

"Stamina," prompted Doc Marks.

"Yeah, stamina. It's a swell picture. It's got your name on it an' everything. Gee, I wish you'd sign it on the picture. The name on it is all right, but it's printed, see? This is a break. If I get that picture signed I'll give them wise guys around the corner the bird!"

The doctor at the head of the bed shook his head disapprovingly.

The Champ was staring down at the half bandaged head.

"We've got to go now, pal," said the Doc to the kid. "The Champ will be here when you come back. Won't you, Champ?"

The Champ's husky voice stuck in his throat.

"Sure, sure," he said huskily. "You stick out your chin, pal. They can't hurt us."

"This is a pipe," assured the kid. "I had a broken leg once. That hurt! This ain't nothin' much. Only kind of a headache an' I can't hear so good. My ears feel all stuffed up."

"Well, I'll be seein' ya," said the Champ.

"Sure. I'll be right back."

They wheeled a litter in and took the kid down the corridor.

In the hall the Champ grabbed Doc Marks by the arm. "What have they got them bandages all around his head for—and his eyes?"

Doc looked at him. "Well, that's where he's hurt. Something—bump on the head—concussion. They think maybe his eyes. They'll know when he comes back. They're hoping for the best."



JOE SULLIVAN'S column said:

Johnny Martin, the welterweight champion, has been haunting the Post Graduate Hospital for the past three weeks to be near the ten-year-old he knocked down with his truck in an unavoidable accident. Doc Marks and the hospital staff have been giving the boy every possible attention following the emergency operation performed the day of the injury. The kid and the Champ are closer than ham and eggs, and the kid thinks the sun rises and sets right on top of the Champ's dome. It's that kind of a combination. They're not so sure the kid's eyes are going to respond to treatment.



THE CHAMP stood in his corner waiting for the bell. He danced around with nervous little steps and beat the new gloves on his fists together to knead the leather against his knuckles. It was entirely an automatic action. He always did that when gloves were tied on his hands.

A moment before Joe Humphreys had crawled into the ring and had stepped up to the suspended microphone, waving his hands for silence.

"Main event—ten rounds! In this corner, the Old Champeeon and idol of Fistiana—Johnnnnny Maaaaartin!"

That was as far as Joe could go. It was the signal for which the crowd had waited. There was a roar within the great arena. It bounced against the steel girders. It fell upon the Champ like a dead weight. Some of that roar had started when he had stepped into the ring in his old, faded bathrobe and had rubbed his feet in the rosin.

Across the ring, Ciotti, quick to sense the Champ's popularity, had rushed over and shaken his hand. He had clumped his glove on the Champ's shoulder patronizingly and had wished him good luck. The Champ had smiled indifferently.

The uproar continued all the time the men were in the center of the ring for instructions.

But the Champ, after the first instant, heard nothing of it, and heard nothing of Donovan's admonitions. He was glad Donovan was to referee.

There were snatches of conversation and snatches of scenes shooting through the Champ's head. That surgeon, down at the Post Graduate, telling him that there was one chance in a thousand that the kid would keep what was left of his eyesight.

"Two or three men in the world might do the job," the surgeon had said. "Grainger or Koontz or Denman. But no one else."

The Champ had inquired about Grainger and Koontz and Denman. He discovered that they were eye-surgeons—or rather gods. Why, Grainger and Koontz and Denman got a thousand dollars for a consultation! And for an operation! Well, maybe five thousand in special instances. Certainly not less.

The Champ had spent all of one night

trying to divide thirty dollars a week into five thousand dollars.

The answer sent him to Danny Johnson at the Garden. Danny shifted the cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other.

"Don't be a sap," he told the Champ. "Listen, kid, you're out of this racket. You're out clean and in good shape. Except for those ingrown ears and that flat nose, you're almost as good as new. You had your day. You gave 'em what you had and they liked it. You made a fortune and you had a hell of a good time. Now you're out. Take my advice and stay out. I don't like to see a guy who was the Champion you were licked like the last time."

And the Champ's voice arguing:

"You don't understand, Danny. I got to have the money. I can't get it no other way. I got to fight for it. I don't know nothin' else. Listen, I must have made you guys plenty of sugar. I never asked you for nothin', did I? I took what I was paid. Well, I need a break now. You got to fix it so I can make five grand. After that I'll never lean on your ear again."

Doc Marks' voice gruff, disgusted. "Don't give me any explanations. You're just a damned fool. We both know what the rest of those people don't know. One paste on the head in the right spot, and it's a tin cup and a concertina for you."

The Champ's hand had closed tight on the Doc's arm. So tight that the fingers gouged into the muscles.

"Cut it out!" he snapped. "I knocked that kid down, didn't I? You heard 'em at the hospital? If I don't do something about it he's going blind. You think I can sit there and see that kid looking at me, trying to grin, and kind of stumblin' around with his hands trying to touch me? Don't I see his eyes! Like eyes in them china dolls. Bright as hell but they don't see nothin'."

"Listen, that kid is solid gold right down to his feet. Don't you think that

he's scared to death? Don't you think that he knows he'll have to live the rest of his life in the dark? But he thinks I'm the Champ, see? He knows in his heart that I won't let nothin' happen to him. He's countin' on me. He believes in me. And I'm not going to be the kind of a rat that'll let him go down in that darkness they've promised him without doing something about it."

Doc Marks made one last protest. "You've done everything a man can do. It was an accident. It happens every day. Jeez! You can't throw away your own life for an accident!"

"Nobody ever called me a rat," growled the Champ. "That's what I'd be if I went sour on that kid."

BLACK TYPE under Paul Williams's by-line.



Johnny Martin fights Rocco Ciotti at the Garden tonight. This is one fight I don't want to see. I remember the Champ when he *was* the Champ. If you remember, Ciotti cut him to ribbons a few months ago. Maybe you remember Johnny Martin stumbling out of the ring after the fight trying to grin, swaying down the aisle, his body beaten to a pulp. His eyes pounded shut and his mouth nothing but a bloody slit in the center of his battered mug. This fight tonight can prove nothing excepting that guys like Martin can't quit. They all come back for more after they've taken all they can stand. It proves that they love the scream and the blood-lust of the pack more than health and life itself. If any one wants to see a Champion who never took a backward step in his life, and will never take one, plodding forward, feeding his body to a buzz saw, he's welcome. I'm going to the movies.

But Paul didn't understand. There was a little bitterness in the Champ about that. He had one of Paul's columns, the one about the Gorman fight, in his scrap book. He liked it better than anything any one else had ever written about him.

Then there was the kid's voice, that

afternoon. "Gee, Champ, you're going to fight that Ciotti mug tonight! Boy, I'd give a million bucks to be there! Slug him one on the kiscus for me, will you?"



SOME ONE shoved his mouthpiece into his mouth and patted him on the back and took away his bathrobe.

The bell rang. The lights over the ring suddenly were blinding and white hot. The house went dark. There was a sudden silence. The Champ could hear his feet sliding forward over the canvas. His shoulder was up and his left was carried low, as he always carried it. He saw Ciotti coming from the opposite corner. Ciotti was smiling at something his manager had called to him as he left the corner. Ciotti was wearing purple trunks embroidered with his initials on the left leg. The Champ had never gone in for that fancy business. He weaved his head for Ciotti's belly. Ciotti's left snaked out and bounced off the side of his neck.

The Champ drove a left hook to Ciotti's body. The Italian grunted and looked surprised. He fanned the Champ's head with a flurry of light rights and lefts. The Champ plodded in, put his head on Ciotti's chest and punched. He carried the Italian to the ropes. The crowd roared. The smack of the punches was like rifle fire.

Donovan stepped in and separated them.

The Champ put his head down and walked in. Ciotti punched from underneath. A fist bounced off the Champ's chin, an uppercut, and the Champ lifted his head for an instant and grinned at Ciotti. The Wop knew what the Champ thought of those punches.

Ciotti's manager called from the corner:

"Box him, Rocco, box him. Use the left. Don't let him crowd you like that."

Ciotti nodded. The Champ bounced his left off Ciotti's jaw. The crowd

screamed again. Ciotti covered and backed away.

The Champ feinted and trapped Ciotti in a neutral corner. He feinted a left hook to the head and then slugged the Italian in the body with his right. Ciotti worked his arms like pistons. They stood in the corner and traded punches. There was a fierce ecstasy bubbling within the Champ. The ecstasy of feeling a body give under the weight of his fists. He heard Ciotti's breath whistle and felt his belly go lax after a right to the heart. He grinned. Ciotti had thought this was a soft touch! Ciotti was out of condition. The Champ gritted his teeth and slugged from the hips.

Ciotti's mouth was open. He was breathing in gasps. The Champ hit him on the mouth. He felt blood splash on his face. Ciotti's knees sagged a little.

Donovan was pulling at the Champ's shoulders as the bell rang.

The Champ sat in his corner and kneaded his gloves together. He was watching Ciotti's seconds work. There was a dazed look on Ciotti's face. His manager was talking excitedly in his ear.

Some one whispered in the Champ's ear:

"Stay downstairs, Champ. He can't take it in the basement. Keep walking in and slugging him to the body. He's soft. He nearly went, over there in the corner. Downstairs. All the time!"

The ten second signal brayed. The Champ stood on his feet. He danced about impatiently. The bell clanged. He went charging across the ring. He carried his hands low. Ciotti hit him in the middle of the face with a left jab. Then the Champ was inside, his fists pounding, his legs driving his body forward.

He batted down Ciotti's left lead with his own right. His body moved sharply to the right, under Ciotti's counter. The Champ's left, driven with terrific velocity traveled a distance of twelve inches. It thudded home under Ciotti's heart. Ciotti doubled at the waist. His knees

sagged sharply. His mouth flew open again. The Champ felt him go—wrestled to tear his arms from Ciotti's frantic clutch.

The crowd was shouting hoarsely, a constant, roaring wave of sound that beat down on the square of canvas under the lights. The crowd was sensing the kill. The crowd that loved Johnny Martin, the Champ—the little bulldog—a fighter who had never come up with a bad fight. They sensed the miracle taking place. Ciotti, who was picked until tonight to be Champion of the World, was going down under the battering fists of the old Champ! Johnny Martin, the Champ who came back!

That was drama! Drama written in the vacuity of Ciotti's face and punctuated with the thudding of the Champ's fists.

The Champ's legs were driving him forward, head down, fists swinging like pistons. Ciotti, going away, was fighting in little broken flurries, covering his body against the assault, reeling along the ropes, moving like a man on wooden legs.

The Champ was thinking of the kid. "Slug him one on the kiscus for me!"

The Champ weaved in under Ciotti's erratic left. He feinted Ciotti off balance with a left hook. The right was cocked. He lashed at Ciotti's jaw. Ciotti countered desperately. He threw his right from around his knees. A last gesture. There was the thud of leather against flesh and bone. There was a shriek from the crowd. The Champ's legs stopped driving him forward for an instant. He shook his head. He stumbled a step, reached for Ciotti with his hands.

Ciotti went away, backing, watching the Champ through narrow eyes. His chest rose and fell brokenly.



THERE was a sudden searing pain gnawing at the Champ's brain. He brushed at his forehead with his hands. Ciotti's right had been like a lead weight

striking against his face. The pain was blinding him. The lights overhead became an exquisite torture. A moment before things had been sharp and clear in the ring. Ciotti's face had been in front of him, the face of a beaten man. Now Ciotti's face had receded into the shadows. It was blurred, indistinct. Ciotti's body was like rising tendrils of vapor.

The Champ felt gloves beating against his jaw. He heard Ciotti's manager shrieking insanely.

"Get him, Rocco! Go in! Can't you see he's hurt?"

And Ciotti, getting the strength from somewhere, was tearing in like a tiger, ripping both hands to the Champ's head and body.

The lights grew dimmer. The Champ felt for Ciotti with his hands . . . groped for him. His mouth was moving. He was whispering to himself: "Got to find him—got to find him—won't find him when it gets dark. . ." His legs drove him forward. He followed Ciotti by the smashing of Ciotti's gloves against his head. Each of those smashes set the pain in his head exploding into new convulsions. Words beat against his brain. Words the specialist had uttered: "A blow affecting the eyes—and the chances are that you'll be blind."

A blow—that right of Ciotti's, for instance. Down those steps again—feeling for the walls of the corridor—in that dressing room—in the dark—for the rest of his life.

The kid's voice—and the kid's eyes—talking to him—looking at him, the way the kid always looked at him, the way that kind of took a guy's breath away. "Slug him one on the kiscus for me!"

It was all mixed with the frantic roar of the mob in the Garden. A roar that went on and on.

His head banged against Ciotti's body. He could hear Ciotti's heart hammering. Ciotti's fists crashed against the Champ's face like blows from a riveting

gun. He drove his right into the middle of Ciotti's belly while he hung onto Ciotti with his left. He felt Ciotti's ribs crunch under that smash. He drove another right to the same place.

He felt Donovan's hand on his shoulder, but he wrestled free, keeping his gloves still on Ciotti. He had to keep feeling the wop, there, in front of him. He couldn't let Ciotti get away. He stepped in close, his left hooking into the black void ahead of him. There were only little patches of green light burning in the blackness now, like railroad switch lights burning in the night. The lights overhead were gone. The ring ropes, the tiers of seats, Donovan, everything was gone. There was only the feel of Ciotti in front of him and the grunting of Ciotti's breathing.

The left thudded against flesh. The right followed after it. He drove the left again to the body. He felt Ciotti's forearm trying to block the blow. That meant Ciotti's hands were down. He threw an overhand right—threw it into the same darkness. He felt the brittle impact of his fist against bone.

He stood there, flat on his feet, and drove punches. He fell forward on his face. The thing he had been hitting, leaning against with the power of his punches had melted away. He felt for the ring ropes and pulled himself to his feet. He heard the thump of the knock-down-timekeeper's mallet. He swung about, feeling for Ciotti again.

Donovan's hand clamped down on his shoulder and spun him around. Donovan's fingers were tearing at the muscles. Donovan's voice was shrieking in his ear.

"Stop it! Stop it! You want to kill him?"

Donovan's two hands gave him a mighty shove in the small of the back. He felt the ring ropes of a corner burn against his chest. He stood, starkly, hanging onto the ropes. He heard Donovan's voice counting, taking up the count at: "FOUR!"

Then he heard the crowd. It sounded as if they were trying to tear the seats out of the Garden.

Some one threw his robe over his shoulders. Some one was crying. He was being led out of the ring, down the steps, feeling for them with his feet.

He heard Doc Marks' voice:

"Give him to me! Damn it, take your hands off him! Give him to me!"

Hands came out of the darkness and clutched at him. Hands along the old path of glory from the ring, through the aisles to the dressing room. How many times had he trod that pathway with strange hands trying to pat him on the back or to shake his hand? Hands of people he didn't know, had never seen.

Back in the ring Joe Humphrey's voice coming over the public address system, saying in jerky sentences: "Winnah—and to us still Champeeeoon—Martin!" And the scream of ecstasy from the mob. Cops beating a way through the crowd ganged up into the exit leading to the dressing rooms.

Doc Marks' voice: "Please, he's hurt. Let him through! Damn it, I'll kill a couple of you! Officer, please, get him through."

And then, the closing of the dressing room door.

The Champ put his gloved hands over his eyes. His voice came up out of his throbbing throat. "Jeez! Doc, that was a sucker punch. I was a sap to let him hit me with that."

The Doc was cutting the gloves from his hands, doing things to his face. A wave of sickness passed over the Champ. It came from the pain in his head. He heard his voice, trailing away:

"I'm sick, Doc, in the belly. . . ."

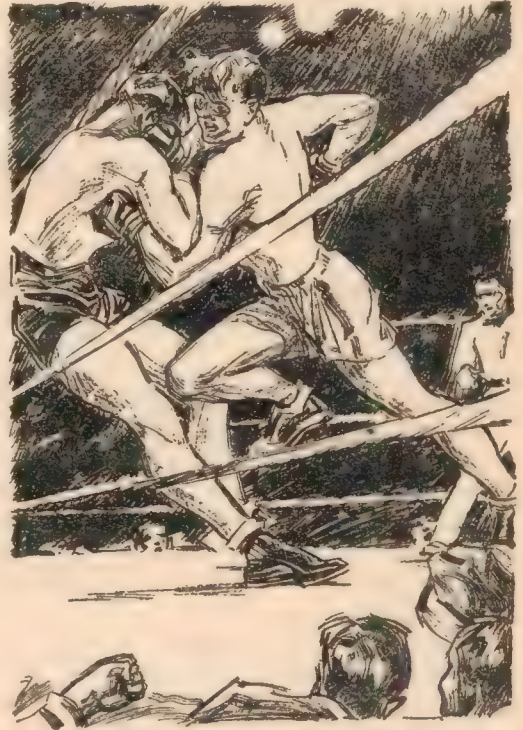
Then there was complete darkness.

An ambulance crew fought a way into the dressing room and loaded the Champ on a litter. Later there was the shriek of a siren and a dash through Eighth Avenue to the hospital.

But the Champ knew nothing about that.



THE KID sat beside the Champ's chair. His face was very serious. His blond hair was carefully combed. He looked almost like a choir boy in his



white hospital gown and robe. A pair of dark glasses rested on his nose but they did nothing to hide the eager, bright blue of his eyes.

The Champ sat in his chair by the window. From the nose up his face was swathed in bandages.

The kid was reading to the Champ. There was a curious musical quality in his voice:

"Master Meadow Mouse was p-u-d-g-y. What does that mean, Champ?"

The Champ's mouth moved.

"It means kind of fat, pal," he explained seriously. "Like when a guy lets himself get out of condition and takes on a lot of blubber around the belly."

"Gee, Champ," sighed the kid. "You sure know all the-words, don't ya?"

The reading went on: "His legs were so short and his tail was so short and his ears were so short that he looked even fatter than he really was. And goodness knows he was plump enough, especially toward fall when the corn was ripe. He lived in Farmer Green's meadow."

The Champ's voice expressed an awe. "You mean to tell me you're readin' all that yourself? On the level—readin' it? You wouldn't fool a pal, would you? You ain't sayin' that from mem'ry?"

"Sure, I'm readin' it," assured the kid. "I ain't no dumbbell, I kin read." He was silent for a little moment. "Only I don't know how you go for this 'Master Meadow Mouse' business, Champ. Jeez! I don't mind readin' it to you, but I don't go for it myself. Bed-time stories!" There was indignant disgust in the kid's voice.

"Where'd you get the book?" said the Champ.

"Them nurses gave it to me," the kid said defensively.

"Nurses are swell people," reproved the Champ. He found the kid's hand. It was lost inside of his own hand.

The kid's voice became confidential. He looked around at the door to be sure they were alone.

"Listen, pal," he told the Champ. "Don't let it get you down. I mean, don't let these big shots give you the jitters. They kind of scared me, too, at first. When I got a load of that special—specialist. What's a specialist, Champ?"

"He's a guy that can do things nobody else can do." The Champ's voice was short and crisp.

"They're o.k. after you know 'em," explained the kid. "Only at first, they kind of give a guy the shivers."

"Yeah, I know," nodded the Champ.

"I was scared there for a while," confided the kid. "I didn't want to let on to anybody, but when that big shot, Koontz, gave me the once-over I

couldn't see much what he looked like. Things was kind of all balled up. It was so dark all the time, and people looked fuzzy. Then I didn't go so big for the operating room, either. They were stallin' me about you coming right over. I figured I couldn't let 'em see that your pal was going soft.

"It was tougher after that. You get it? Lying there, hearin' people all around you, and bein' fed and washed—and not being able to see." The kid's voice came to an end on a strained note.

The muscles in the Champ's neck were taut.

"Then he came in one day and they unwound the bandages . . . and I found out that big shot, Koontz, wasn't such a bad looking mug after all. He went out and bought me a whole quart of ice cream. And the nurse cried."

"You mean—you could see?" There was intensity in the Champ's question.

"Sure, I could see! I could see everything."

There was a long silence. It filled the room.

The kid's voice was almost a whisper. "I heard 'em say they were comin' to undo your bandages today. Only, I wasn't supposed to say anything. That's swell, ain't it?"

"Yeah, that's swell." The Champ's hand was holding the kid's hand tightly.

Suddenly the kid sobbed. His head dropped onto the Champ's knee. "Jeez! I can't stand it, Champ. Seein' you sittin' here—not bein' able to move without somebody leadin' you 'round. Me an' you, kiddin' around—and me havin' to look at them lousy bandages."

The Champ's mouth tightened. "Why there ain't nothin' to worry about, pal. Didn't Koontz fix you up? Well, didn't Doc Marks get him to work on me? Jeez! It's a cinch he'll do as much for me as he did for you. Didn't I tell you a specialist was a guy who could do things nobody else could?"

There was the slight sound of a door

opening and the slither of rubber-soled shoes on the waxed floor of the room.

"Doctor Koontz is coming," said the nurse's voice. "Little boys have to go out when big doctors want to see patients."

The Champ's hand was holding tightly to the kid's hand.

"I want to stay," said the kid defiantly. "The Champ needs me."

"Aw, let him stay," said the Champ gruffly.

The nurse looked at the Champ's hand, and the kid's hand. She turned away.

The booming voice of Doctor Koontz filled the room.

"Well," he said. "My two star patients!"

There was the rattle of instruments in a tray. The doctor's hands touched the Champ's head. There was a little silence. A little moment when nothing happened.

Then Koontz' voice again.

"The scissors, nurse." The sound of steel snipping through gauze. And then the doctor's hands unwinding the bandage, length after length. The Champ feeling it slide off his head. His right hand gripped the arm of his chair. He was leaning forward a little, his body rigid. The kid's face was white with the force of the Champ's grip upon his hand.

The last length of the bandage fell away. The doctor bent forward and watched the Champ's face. The kid was staring with stricken eyes. The Champ's hand moved slowly across his face, as if to be sure that the bandage was all gone. His shoulders sagged a little. He sank back in the chair.

The kid's voice came up to him. "Champ! Champ! Can you see?"

The Champ's white mouth moved in a little grin. "Sure I can see—I can see swell." There were little pauses between the words. "I'm just so—so—glad—I can't say nothin'." His head did not move. His eyes were staring straight in front of him.

The kid's face was very white. His mouth opened.

"You're a liar!" he sobbed. "You're givin' me a stall!"

He put his face down on the Champ's knees. He covered the face with his hands.

"You'd be surprised how good the kid can read," the Champ told the doctor. "Gee—he just skips rope through them books. I'm sure proud of him."

The great surgeon's hands fell on the Champ's shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Champ," he said quietly. "Maybe—in a little while—"

The Champ put a finger across his mouth and made faces at the doctor and toward the boy.

"Sure, I get it! I don't see so well at first, but everything is going to be oakey-doakey. I just gotta wait till my eyes sorta get used to—to the light again, huh? Sure. I get ya."

The nurse's shoes made a little screech on the waxed floor as she turned away. She almost ran out of the room. The instruments in the tray made little tinkling noises as she moved.

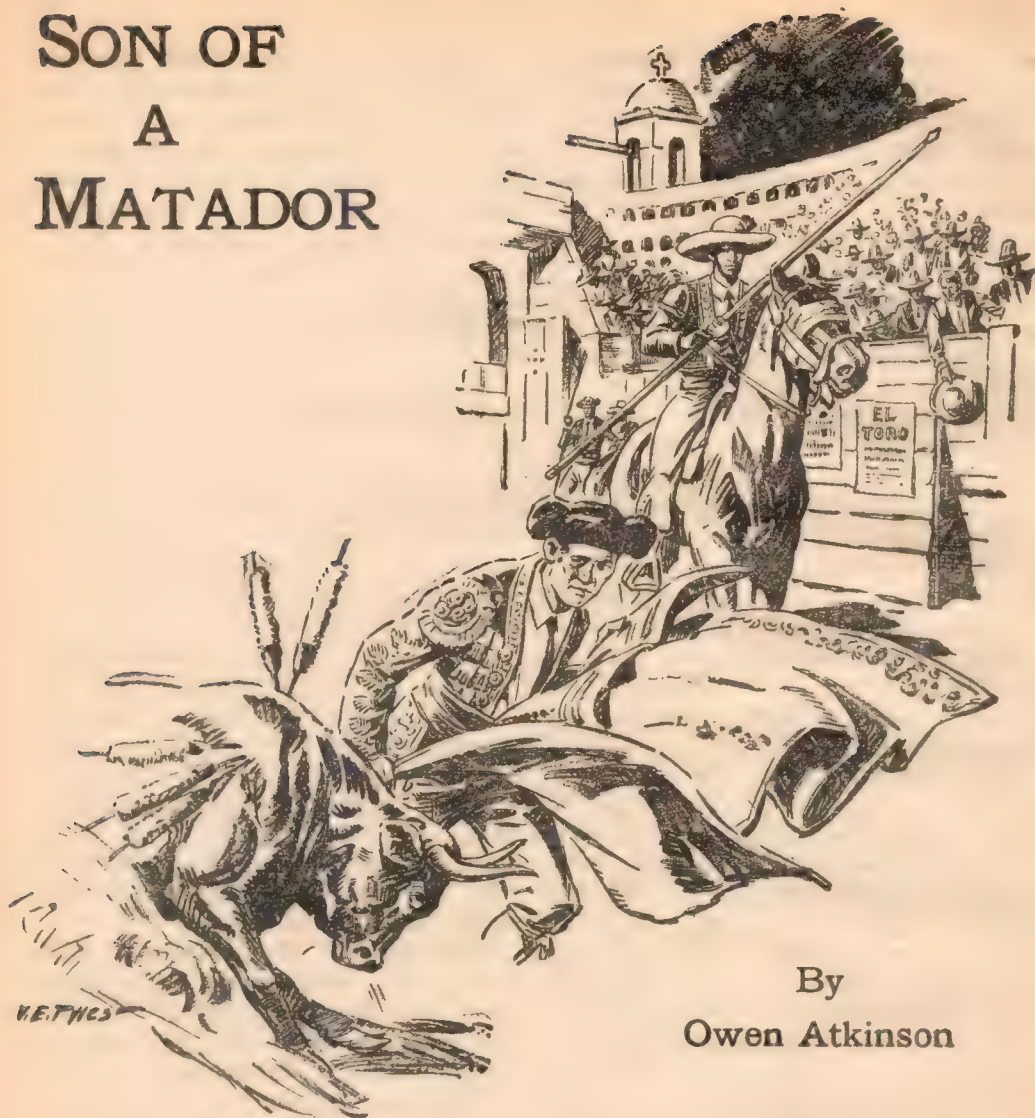
The great surgeon put his hand on the kid's shoulder. "You take good care of him, son," he warned.

The kid lifted his head. His face was wet with tears. A hot indignation flooded into his eyes.

"What d'ya mean, take good care of him?" he demanded fiercely. "He don't need nobody to take care of him! He's the Champeen, ain't he?"



SON OF A MATADOR



By
Owen Atkinson

“**T**HIS season we go to Spain,” stated Gabino, the *banderilero*, with emphasis. His short, squat, broad-shouldered body slanted forward in his chair. Both fists rested on the marble-topped table. The scar which ran from the corner of his nose to his right ear glowed red.

Jim Hannon, more commonly known as Don Jaime, studied his friend with a quiet smile on his lean, sun-dried features. Don Jaime had just finished a very successful tour of the bull rings of

provincial Mexico and was tired. He had fought in the small wooden ring at Mazatlan, had run bulls in the ancient *plazas* in the south where his audience was composed of wooden-faced Indians who watched emotionlessly as he worked the small, wiry bulls from the high plateau country.

Spain, of course, was indicated at this time. After a bull-fighter had made a certain reputation for himself in Mexico it was only natural that he be invited to fight for a season in the mother coun-

try. Spain was always anxious to see the new phenomena which developed in the bull rings of Mexico.

"Not this season, I'm afraid," Don Jaime lighted a thin, black cigar and blew a stream of blue smoke toward the ceiling of the café. "I had a talk with the promoter, Del Heirro. He says that I need another year in Mexico before I tackle the big bulls at Madrid."

Gabino snorted with disgust.

"He knows that you are a sensation," he cried wrathfully. "It is to make money for his own pockets that he keeps you here. Every one knows that Del Heirro is the dictator of bull-fighting in Mexico. Why should he allow such a money-maker as you to leave the country?"

Jim Hannon shrugged. There was no answer to that question. He knew very well why Del Heirro insisted that he remain in Mexico. It was common gossip in the cafés. But what could a man do about it? And especially an American bull-fighter. In Mexico you did as you were told. If promoter Del Heirro said that you remained—well, you were thankful that you could get fights at all.

"I have some influence," announced Gabino, puffing up his chest. "I will go to the head men of the government. I will insist that you be given a chance to fight in Spain. There your reputation will grow. You will make many, many times as much as you do here. And I will share. It is for the glory of us both that I insist upon a season where bull fighting is appreciated."

Don Jaime chuckled quietly. When he had formed his partnership with the squat little Gabino, the man had been on the verge of starvation. A few bad afternoons in the ring—a goring and a couple of months spent in the hospital had about finished Gabino. With Don Jaime to help him, the little *banderillero* had made a surprising come-back. He was now well thought of. His mistakes

of the past had been forgotten. But as to his having influential friends in the government—Don Jaime doubted it.

As if to prove his recent statement, Gabino leaped to his feet, and a wide smile illuminated his brown face.

"Ah," he cried, "my friend Salvador Correa approaches. This way, Señor Correa." He beckoned the newcomer to the table.

Don Jaime recognized the trim little figure in the conventional black of Mexico as a once-famous bull-fighter—perhaps the most famous fighter of all. His reputation had become a legend wherever bulls were run, wherever men entered the ring to pit their strength and brains against the sharp horns of the bulls. Correa had retired a very wealthy man. He had purchased an enormous ranch near Mexico City, a beautiful house in town, and had settled down to the life of a leisurely Mexican gentleman. It was rumored that Señor Correa had a son who was destined to be his equal in the bull ring.

The old gentleman bowed stiffly. He came gliding across the café with the effortless grace of a man still in excellent physical condition in spite of his age. He acknowledged his introduction to Don Jaime with a brief smile.

"Excellent," he said in a thin, hard voice. "Don Jaime is the very man I wish to see. In fact, I have come all the way from my ranch to have conversation with him."

Gabino glowed with pleasure. To be greeted by the famous Correa in public was an honor. To have him sit at the table was like a public acknowledgment of glory.

"It is only natural," cried Gabino, "that the two most famous men in Mexico should meet. It is my pleasure to introduce you."

Correa waved away Gabino's effusive introduction and seated himself at Don Jaime's left.

"My business is important," he began.

"It is of my son I wish to speak with Don Jaime. As you know, my boy is now of eighteen years. It is time that he went into the ring to show the people what he can do. I have given him the best of training. He has been to the school for bull-fighters here in Mexico City. I have also instructed him in my private ring on the ranch. He is now ready for a public appearance."

"Where do I come in on this deal?" asked Don Jaime. "After you have taught the boy what you know there is nothing left for me to show him. Who am I to add to the teaching of the great Correa?"

Señor Correa acknowledged the compliment with a stiff little bow.

"Quite true," he admitted. "But I wish the boy to enter the ring with you as an *alternative*. With you to sponsor his first appearance, he will receive a warm welcome. If I were a little younger I would, naturally, take him into the ring myself. But my bull-fighting days are over. It is the legs." He leaned over and tapped his knees meaningly. "The brains and the arms are good but the legs have failed me. The old wounds ache and I cannot move as fast as is necessary."

"But I have never seen the boy in action," protested Don Jaime. "I do not want to take the responsibility."

"Did I not say that this was an affair of business?" Correa began quietly. "I happen to know that you wish to go to Spain. And I also know the reason why you are not booked to appear in Spanish rings. Del Heirro is a friend. It is needless to say that I have much influence with him. In fact, he is in my debt for a number of favors which I have been able to do him in the past. A word from me and you go to Spain. Do I make myself clear, Don Jaime?"

The lean American sat up with a jerk. "Spain? So that is the reward you offer for my taking your son into the ring?"

"You put it bluntly, Señor," evaded

Correa. "But it is business between us. You wish something. I also have a wish. Can we not please each other?"

Gabino leaped to his feet, his eyes flashing.

"Spain!" he cried. "I knew we would go to Spain. Something in my bones told me. What good fortune it was when Señor Correa came to our table!"

Señor Correa leaned back in his chair contentedly.

"It is agreed, then?" he asked. "This coming Sunday my son goes into the ring with you. Do not be afraid for Macario. He has had the training of the best. I, myself, have seen to that."

"But—this coming Sunday?" protested Don Jaime. "If I am to sponsor the boy I must know something of his style, technique. If I am to be of any help to him I must know how he fights."

"That is easily arranged," said Señor Correa. "You and your friend will come to my ranch at once. In my private ring, Macario will handle a few bulls for you. You will then see that he has inherited the style of his father, the grace, the swiftness, the skill with which he goes in over the horns to kill the bull."

"Agreed!" Gabino slapped his hands on the table. "It is an honor to be invited to the ranch of the great Correa. You provide the bulls and we will do the rest."



MACARIO CORREA turned out to be a tall, slender, olive-skinned boy. He did not look like a bull-fighter. A student, perhaps, but not a bull-fighter. He shrugged his shoulders.

"My father wishes it," he explained. "Therefore, I go into the ring." For him that seemed to settle the matter. An obedient son must follow his father's wishes.

That afternoon in the ring, Macario showed what he could do. A big, black bull came charging out on the corrals and stood, for an instant, in the center of

the sanded circle, his great horns lifted, nostrils dilated, as he sniffed the air for his enemy.

Macario walked across to the bull, dragging his fighting cape. The bull turned, saw the boy—and charged. Deftly, skillfully, Macario passed the bull with his cape, turned him sharply and brought him back again passing him on the left. His style, Don Jaime could see, was flawless. But he had no heart. One by one he ran through the tricks of the profession. A butterfly. A neat *veronica*. This was followed by a *farol*, which started as a *veronica*, but ended with the bull wound around the man with his nose almost touching his tail. Then came the most difficult *ortizima*.

As a final gesture Macario passed the bull so close that the horns flicked a piece of braid from the front of his trousers. Then he turned the bull, fixed him in place, coolly walked away, leaving the bewildered animal standing in the middle of the ring. A flutter of applause ran around the small crowd of *vaqueros* and ranch hands which had gathered to see the spectacle. Even Don Jaime was forced to applaud.

But only too well the American knew the difference between fighting bulls in a private ring before a few friends and entering the big concrete bowl in Mexico City with thousands of rabid fans shrieking advice from all sides. The noise, the excitement, the uproar is liable to turn a man's head. And a bull-fighter needs steady nerves when he is in the ring with a wild bull.

And now came the *estocada*, the moment of killing. It was now that the real test would take place. Many a man can go into the ring and pass the bull with the cape. But when he stands face to face with that infuriated creature, a sharp sword in his right hand, a narrow *muleta* in his left and knows that he must either kill the bull or the bull will kill him—ah, that is the moment of truth, as the Spanish call it. It is then

that the audience knows whether the matador has the proper courage.

Macario took his sword and narrow cape and walked out into the ring. The bull saw him coming and charged. Macario passed the bull with the *muleta*, turned and brought him back. At this point in the fight it is the privilege of the matador to display his bag of tricks. Now he could demonstrate to the audience how clever he was. How close he could pass the bull. How he could dominate the animal and force that mountain of charging fury to obey the commands of the *muleta*.

Macario chose to do nothing of the kind. Easily and skillfully, he maneuvered the bull into position. Both front feet together. Head low, eyes following the slight ripple of the *muleta* in the left hand. Then Macario went in to kill. He profiled beautifully, took one step forward and dropped the *muleta* in his left hand. At the same time the bull charged. He leaned in across the wide-spread horns and placed the sword in that narrow space between the shoulder-blades. The sword slid in to the hilt. Macario's left hand carried the bull out and away and the big, black, fighting machine pitched to his knees and, with a grunt and a flip of his short tail, died.

Applause! Hats and flowers showered into the ring. Macario bowed, grinned at the friendly cowboys who had known him since childhood and walked out of the ring. Correa turned to the American.

"Well, what do you think of him now?" he demanded. "He has exactly my style when I was of his age. He will be a sensation in the ring. The fact that he is my son will attract large crowds. My old friends will be there, all the critics."

"It takes more than style to make a bull-fighter," Don Jaime answered evasively. "The boy has been well trained. He is familiar with the technique of his profession. But you realize,

of course, that he needs experience. Señor Correa, why don't you send him out into the country like other *novilleros* so that he can build up his self-confidence?"

"But he is the son of Salvador Correa!" The old matador drew himself up proudly. "It is not necessary for him to build up a reputation in the country rings. When he appears in Mexico City and shows what he can do, his reputation will be established at once. He will become famous overnight. Is he not my son? Have I not, personally, trained him for the ring?"

"Of course, of course," Hannon agreed hurriedly. "But it is of yourself that I was thinking. To enter the ring for the first time is nerve-racking, as you will understand. Suppose the boy becomes excited, forgets his training? Suppose he has a bad afternoon? Your friends will be there—and your enemies. All the critics will be watching for the slightest mistake. If anything goes wrong it might be embarrassing to you."

A dark shadow seemed to slide over Correa's face. His eyes narrowed to glittering pinpoints.

"Macario will not fail," he said quietly. "He is my son. I can tell, Don Jaime, that you are attempting to discredit the boy. Perhaps it is that you see in him a rival, a new sensation who will take your place in the eyes of the public. Jealousy among bull-fighters is not unknown."

"Such a thing is unthinkable," interrupted Gabino jovially. "Don Jaime is firmly established. He need fear no rival in Mexico."

"I have many friends," went on Señor Correa, in a rasping voice. "If Don Jaime does not do as I ask him he will discover that my friends have turned against him. He will be ruined in Mexico. I am an old man and I wish to see my son in the ring before I die. He will appear with you on Sunday. Do you understand?"

Don Jaime shrugged.

"Let it be as you say," he agreed. "But I can accept no responsibility for the performance the boy gives in the ring. Let us hope that everything works out for the best."



IT WAS most unusual for an unknown fighter to be allowed to take his *alternative* in the ring at Mexico City without first having acquired some reputation in provincial rings. But Salvador Correa was not without influence, as he had suggested, and the matter was arranged. The old *matador* and his son appeared in the cafés around the city, where the boy was introduced to the friends of his father. His coming appearance caused quite a sensation. It was not every day that the son of a famous *matador* entered the ring for the first time. Correa's friends wished Macario plenty of luck. The old man's enemies sat back and waited, hoping that the boy would fail, eager for a chance to get back at the arrogant old man through the mistakes of his son.

Don Jaime found an opportunity to talk with Macario on the morning of the fight. The boy had been to church and, tall and grave and solemn in his dark clothes, he sat in Don Jaime's room and talked frankly of what was to come.

"Since I was a little boy I have been brought up with the bulls," he said. "Always, my father has talked of my becoming a matador. He would not hear of me entering any other profession. For myself, I have always wanted to be a writer of books, a maker of wonderful novels, like the great Ibañez. My father frowned when he caught me reading. He hated to see me writing in the evening. Always he talked of the bulls. Morning, noon and night he discussed with me the behavior of bulls, what ideas they had, how they had acted in the ring during his own fighting days. When I was but twelve, he put a cape in my hands at the

tentaderos, the testing of young bulls. I was his son. I would some day be famous, he reminded me always."

"Are you afraid of the bulls?" Hannon asked quietly.

The boy gazed at him steadily for a second, then nodded. "Yes, I am terrified of them. My heart stands still when I see the bull charge. There is a piece of lead in the pit of my stomach."

Don Jaime laughed lightly.

"You are, at least, honest," he said. "All bull-fighters are afraid. No man has ever lived who would not be afraid of a wild bull. But we conquer our fear—and make the bull afraid of us. That is the secret of the ring."

Macario smiled wanly.

"I am not so much afraid of the bulls," he said, "as the anger of my father. If I fail this afternoon the old man would explode. You do not understand his pride, his great dignity. He thinks of me as himself, as his younger self with which he is starting a new career. He does not consider my personal wishes at all."

Hannon felt a surge of sympathy for the boy. He understood very well the vast pride of the father, a personal dignity so great that it cannot be understood by any but the Latin races. He crossed the room and clapped young Macario on the back.

"Don't worry, my boy," he spoke cheerfully. "We will keep an eye on each other. Together we will give them a performance that will make their hair curl."

"To make their hair curl?" Macario's eyebrow went up. "Is this an expression of slang?"

"You'll see what I mean this afternoon," Hannon assured him. "Until then, my friend, go with God."

"*Si compañero*," Macario echoed and went to his hotel to dress.

Gabino was highly optimistic about the coming fight. He came bustling in all energy and excitement.

"Nothing else is talked of in the cafés,"

he announced. "You have made yourself more popular by helping the son of Señor Correa. If the boy is a success the credit will come to you."

"But suppose he fails?" Hannon pointed out. "I will be blamed for having introduced him too soon."

"But how could he fail?" protested Gabino. "Is he not the son of the great Salvador Correa?"

"That's what his father thinks, anyway," agreed Don Jaime dryly. "Well we shall see. There is only one way to find out. Come now, it is time to dress. Get out my red and yellow suit. It is always lucky for me, and I've got an idea I'm going to need plenty of luck this afternoon."



BY FOUR O'CLOCK that afternoon the bull ring was packed to suffocation. Apparently everybody in Mexico City had decided to be present on Macario's first public appearance. The day was perfect, the sun bright, the air crisp and cold. It was late in the fall and the dry season had set in; there was no danger that the fight would be rained out.

Don Jaime and Gabino and the rest of the troupe joined Macario and his father outside the *puerta de las cuadrilla de calle*, the stage-door of the arena. The old matador, Hannon noted, was laboring under an intense inner excitement. Perhaps he recalled his own first appearance and some of the long-dead emotion came back to him. Macario appeared calm and well-poised, but Hannon could see that his eyes mirrored the shadow of a doubt and that his hand, clutching the corner of his parade cape, trembled slightly. The third matador of the afternoon was a young Mexican called El Guero, a thick-set, round-faced, peon type, but a man famous for his shrewdness and his knowledge of bulls.

Señor Correa gave some final advice to his son.

"Guard yourself well, my boy, but be

not afraid of the bull. Remember, he is always dangerous. Do not grow overconfident and turn your back on him when he is fresh. When you kill, kill bravely and cleanly in the manner I've taught you. The eyes of the world are upon you today, also the eyes of your father. We would be proud of you, my son. Do not disappoint us."

"Yes, father," Macario kept his eyes fixed on the gate through which he would enter into the ring.

A bugle shrilled inside the arena. The gates swung slowly open.

"Now!" said Hannon. "Let's go, boy. Chin up, head back. The first impression is important."

The three matadors came out into a blaze of sunshine and were greeted by a roar from the crowd. The bull-fight had started. The machinery had been set in motion. Nothing could stop it now, not even death.

A tense hush settled over the ring as the fighters took their places and the gaudily harnessed mules disappeared through a rear gate. All eyes were fixed on a narrow green door set into the side of the bull ring. The bugle screamed again, the green door opened and a big red bull came charging into the ring. A vast sigh echoed through the arena. The first bull. A good one, wide of horn and heavily muscled. Red and black ribbons fluttered from the hump over his shoulders. The colors of the Rancho Seco, where the bull had been bred. And they bred good fighting stock at the Rancho Seco.

Fifteen minutes after the bull enters the ring he must be dead. That is the law. If the matador has failed to kill his bull he can be fined by the president of the ring. Or he can be sent to jail. That, also, is the law. Hannon turned to Macario.

"This is ours," he said. "Go out and see what he can do."

The boy jumped as if Hannon had thrust a pin into him. Then he nodded,

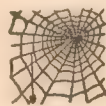
gathered up his fighting cape and walked out to face the red bull. The beast saw him coming and charged. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, his great body hurtling across the ring like a locomotive. There was no preliminary nonsense of snorting and pawing the ground about this bull. He knew what he was in the ring for—to fight.

Macario stopped, spread his cape. The bull lowered his head and lunged. The cape billowed upward as the great horns tore through it. It was jerked out of Macario's hand and sent flying across the ring. The boy turned, bewildered, dazed by the roar of sound which smashed down at him from the wildly screaming audience. He looked down stupidly and saw that the cape was gone. He looked again and saw the bull charging, head lowered, one horn advanced like a rapier.

Then a cloud of cloth floated in between Macario and the bull. Don Jaime was there, taking the bull away in a beautiful *quite*. He passed the bull, turned him toward the barrier. Gabino stepped out and fluttered a cape in the bull's face, moving him still farther away from the helpless Macario.

Don Jaime picked up the boy's cape and handed it to him.

"Pull yourself together," he advised quietly. "Pay no attention to the crowd. They will permit one mistake, but not two. Now show them what you can do with the bull."



MACARIO seemed to come out of his daze with a start. He gripped the edges of the cape and ran across the ring toward the bull. The animal turned and charged, all in one effortless movement. Macario passed him to the right, turned him and passed him on the left. He backed away and invited the bull with the cape. The bull refused. He stood panting, studying the gaudy figure before him through glaring red eyes.

This was the first time the bull had ever seen a man on the ground. At the ranch, all men were mounted. This was the first chance the bull had ever had to catch a man without his horse. The bull intended to make the most of his opportunity. Now he studied just how to do it. He charged again.

A swift, lunging rush carried him across the sand at an astonishing speed. Macario allowed the cape to drift to one side. The bull's head went into the cape but, suddenly, he turned. What happened was a blur of color and movement with man and bull and cape blended together. Macario went up into the air, the cape flying in the other direction. The boy turned over once and fell heavily on his face. Instantly, the bull was on top of him. But so eager was the animal that his horn thrust went into the sand instead of the prone body. Before he could recover, capes were fluttering all about him and men yelled in his very face and he became confused and lost all sense of direction and went charging away toward the far side of the arena.

Hannon picked Macario up and stood him on his feet.

"You're not hurt, boy," he spoke sharply. "Both horns missed you. Stand up now and show them you're not afraid."

Macario staggered, caught himself and stood erect. In his ears sounded a strange noise. At first, he didn't know what it was. Then he realized that the crowd was laughing at him, jeering his amateurish efforts. A flush spread over his olive face. He, the son of Salvador Correa, was being laughed at!

"Give me a cape," he growled. "I'll show these dogs how a Correa can fight."

"Careful, boy," warned Don Jaime. "The bull has found you once. He'll know where to look for you the next time."

"Out of my way," snarled Macario.

"Out of the ring. I'll show them how to handle this bull."

What followed was a spectacle not often witnessed in the ring in Mexico City. Macario's bull-fighting was technically sound. He was in splendid health, young, lean and wiry. And anger boiled through his veins like liquid fire. He could see nothing now but the bull. The big red bull which had caused his humiliation. He challenged the bull with the cape, passed him so close that the animal's shoulder bumped the boy to one side, turned the bull so short that the bones of his spine ground together. Again and again he passed the bull, using every pass in the repertoire of the most professional fighter. At each pass, the bull's horns came closer and closer to the boy's chest. Great lunging sighs went up from the crowd. The next pass will be the last. The boy was a fool, he was crazy. The next time the bull would get him.

Jim Hannon, standing under Señor Correa's box, looked up and saw the face of the father. It was like a mask of stone. The old man sat there without moving, his eyes pin-points of fire, his mouth set in a grim, hard line. It was madness, of course, what was going on out there in the ring, but it was glorious madness. And this was Macario Correa who was lifting the fans out of their seats with every pass.

Slowly, the boy's anger cooled and he realized that he was very tired. Perspiration was streaming down his face, his costume was soaked. He passed the bull again, fixed him in place, walked across and slapped him on the nose. This was pure bravado but the crowd loved it. Macario walked away from the bull and vaulted over the barrier.



WHILE the bull was worrying the horses, Hannon had a talk with the boy.

"That was beautiful work, Macario," he said quietly, "but very

dangerous. For one of your experience you were working too close to the bull. He almost got you there two times. It is all very well to give the fans a thrill. That is why they come to the bull ring. But a matador's own life is important. He should not take such great risks."

"I lost my head," Macario confessed. "When they laughed at me I wanted revenge."

"So does the bull," Hannon pointed out. "Do not forget that he learns rapidly. That is why no bull can ever enter the ring for a second time. He would have learned so much on his first visit that he would kill us all if we ever gave him a second chance."

"I'll try to be careful," Macario promised.

Gabino went out to put in the *banderillas*. The squat little man had been in hundreds of fights, but he had never overcome his fear of the bull. By his actions he admitted plainly that he was afraid. When the bull came too close, Gabino turned and ran. Sometimes, so swift was his retreat and so great his terror, that he would dive head first over the *barrera* in order to escape. At such times the stands would roar with laughter.

But Gabino always came back for more. And he usually succeeded in placing a pair of *banderillas* in the shoulder muscle of the bull where they would do the most good. If the bull had a tendency to hook to right or left, Gabino corrected this with the sharp barbs of the *banderillas*. Today he was afraid of the red bull—and showed it. He walked out cautiously, stood in the middle of the ring, a barbed stick in each hand.

"Ha, *toro!*" he called in a feeble voice, as if he were afraid of attracting the bull's attention. The red one heard him, turned and looked, came trotting across the ring to investigate. Fifty feet away, his near-sighted eyes identified the man

and the trot increased to a murderous rush.

Gabino began to run. He ran on his toes like a ballet dancer, the twin sticks held high over his head. The bull tried to change direction but Gabino was still faster. The red one missed the man and, as he shot passed, Gabino leaned over and inserted both barbs in the great muscle which ran along the bull's shoulder.

The bull bellowed with rage and pain, turned and charged again at Gabino. But the little man was running in earnest now. Over the *barrera* he shot, to fall in a heap on the other side. A wave of applause washed around the ring. Gabino's performance was technically correct. He had placed the *banderillas* properly. The fact that he had run away afterward, humanized him and made him very sympathetic to the audience.

"Permit me to kill this bull," demanded Macario of Don Jaime. "I ask it as a special favor. I have just seen my father's face. He is not pleased with me. I must do something at once to make up for my mistake."

"Go ahead," agreed Hannon. "But don't try any fancy tricks. Just go out there and kill him and let it go at that. Your father may be annoyed, but think how he'd feel if you received a bad goring."

Macario looked at the American steadily.

"I wonder about that," he said slowly. "My father is a strange man. I think he would rather see me dead than a failure."

Before Hannon could answer the boy had seized his sword and *muleta*, leaped over the *barrera* and was walking out toward the bull. An expectant hush settled over the ring. The bull-fight had arrived at its final stage. The tragedy of the death of the bull had entered the last act. Theoretically, the bull had been tired so that his head hung low, thus exposing the vital spot between the shoul-

der blades, the only spot in that great muscled body where the short sword could enter and reach the heart. It was now Macario's privilege to administer death to the brave animal.

The bull came to meet him and Macario spread the *muleta* with the sword and, using it like a cape, tested the bull's strength and courage by passing him rapidly, first to the left and then to the right. The bull charged in a straight line, Hannon could see. He was still brave, still charged when offered the *muleta*. A good bull. Ah, but a shrewd, crafty bull and one that had learned a great deal in the last ten minutes. He had reached the man once. He had been allowed to boost horses around the ring in order to give him confidence. The bull was tired, true, but he was much wiser than when he had first come charging out of the narrow green door.

Macario offered him the *muleta* again but the bull, instead of charging, turned away and retired to his *querencia*, or the one spot in the ring where he felt at home and on the defensive. Every bull, during the course of a fight, develops a *querencia*. Usually it is near the door through which he entered. Here he feels safe and able to protect himself against his enemy. It is the moment when the bull decides to retire to his *querencia* that matadors dread. If they attempt to kill him in that position they are almost invariably gored. The only hope is to get him out and away from what he thinks is a place of safety.



HANNON saw what had happened and yelled hoarsely at Macario. "Wait a minute, I'm coming." Gabino had also vaulted the *barrera* and was running toward the bull. Señor Correa was standing up in his box, his face putty-colored, eyes bulging. Only too well he knew the danger of attempting to kill a bull in his *querencia*.

Macario looked up, saw his father's

face—and thought that the old man had grown still angrier at him. In desperate haste, paying no attention to Don Jaime or Gabino, who were rushing out to help him, he ran to the bull, turned him with the *muleta*, made sure that both front feet were together, that the bull's head was down and his eyes fixed on the fluttering edge of the red cloth, profiled rapidly, poised for an instant then drove the sword in over the horns.

Instead of charging, as he would have if he had been in any other part of the ring, the bull, feeling safe in his *querencia*, tossed his head. The top of the animal's skull caught Macario in the chest and spun him over backward. The boy hit the sand, and bounced to his feet like a rubber ball. He looked at his father again and saw that the old matador was leaning forward, gripping the rail of the box, his face contorted with emotion. Macario picked up his sword, grabbed the *muleta* and went after the bull again. By this time, both Don Jaime and Gabino had arrived and were imploring him to leave the bull alone until they could coax the infuriated animal out of his *querencia*. Macario paid no attention. He had disgraced himself, had disgraced his father. He must go in and kill the bull no matter what happened. That was what the old man had drilled into him since childhood. And time was precious. Any second now the final bugle would blow, which would mean that the president of the fight had ordered the bull taken out of the ring and slaughtered with a dagger thrust in the spinal column. That would mean more disgrace.

Macario tried again. This time the sword hit bone and sprang back to arch in a glittering circle overhead and come down on the boy's feet. He seized it again and felt a stab of pain run up his right wrist. He had sprained the wrist when the sword had buckled against the bone. It was agony to hold the light sword, but Macario clung to it in des-

peration. He advanced upon the bull, took careful aim and lunged forward again. This time he threw caution to the winds, leaned far over the spreading horns and inserted the sword. The next thing he knew he felt a blow on the leg, a searing pain in his chest. Then he was flying through the air, spinning over and over. There was a roar of sound around him, whether laughter or applause he could not tell.

He came down, hit the sand with stunning force and for an instant lay sprawled there, his body numb with pain. But not for long. Waves of sound washed against his ears. The crowd was laughing at him, whistling and booing, jeering him out of the ring. That he could not stand. He was Macario Correa. The son of a matador. A fierce pride welled up inside of him. A personal pride. His father was too old to fight but he, young Macario, was young and strong and had the courage. With a mighty effort he staggered to his feet. He found that he was still clutching the *muleta* in his left hand. His right hand and arm were wet with blood. The bull's or his own? He did not know.

Men were running out from the *barrera*. He recognized Hannon and the squat little Gabino. He looked and saw the bull at his feet—dead, the sword buried to the hilt between the shoulder blades. Again, a thunder of noise drummed again his ears. He shook his head. His chin went up. Erect, shoulders back, he faced the mob. He knew what his father felt now. He had killed his bull, had known that fierce joy in mastering the beast, in dominating a cruel, merciless animal. Let the crowd laugh. Let them whistle. Macario didn't care. He had not only conquered the bull but he was, at last, master of himself. The blood of his father, of his ancestors had washed through his veins,

purifying Macario's spirit of any taint of cowardice or timidity.

And then Hannon and Gabino arrived. Both were smiling. Gabino knelt and, with a short knife, cut off one of the bull's ears. Hannon slapped the boy on the back.

"Bravo!" he cried. "That was magnificent, Macario. You were tossed by a dead bull. Such a thing has not happened once in a thousand fights. Tomorrow you will be famous all over Mexico. My apologies, *amigo*. At first, I was afraid for you. I thought you did not have the courage of your father. I tried to protect you from the defeat I was sure you would suffer in the ring. But now—a great future lies before you. You will make the name of Correa even more glorious than ever. You will rise to greater heights than your father."

Macario was still slightly dazed.

"The ear," he stammered. "Is it for me?"

"But of course," cried Gabino, presenting the bloody trophy with an elaborate bow. "Do you not hear them cheer? Do you not see the white handkerchiefs going? You have done a marvelous thing. You are the hero of the hour. You are no longer the son of a matador, you are a great matador yourself."

Macario turned and looked toward his father's box. The old man was standing by the rail. He carried his body proudly erect, shoulders flat, spine stiff with pride. All about him the crowds cheered. Wave after wave of applause. The old man bowed.

Macario put his left hand on Don Jaime's shoulder for support. A faint smile quirked his lips.

"Look at the Old Man," he said to Hannon. "In the spotlight again. And he loves it. See how he bows. And why not? Is he not the father of a matador?"



A RADIUM FOR TO LISTEN TO

by H. H. Matteson

THE spiller of this fish trap belonging to Capstan Culberson was busting full of big Tyee salmon, worth then close to a dollar a piece. This here was lucky. The run hadn't hit Cap's trap at all until just the second day before he'd 'a' had to shut down and quit fishing. Capstan and his young red-head wife, which is why the savages call her Pil Yakso, meaning "red-head," had been desperate hard up, there being times when they hadn't scarcely eat. Now here was a fortune in the spiller at the very last of the run, enough to see them through the year, outfit 'em for the next.

Capstan he surveys the churning mass in the spiller of the trap, a fortune in them big Tyees, and very jubilant he goes careening along the lead to the

shore for to tell Pil Yakso she can have that terrible red carpet she wants so bad, and a new dress, and a radium for to listen to.

Capstan is just setting foot on the step of their *barabara* to go on in and announce joyful to Pil Yakso, when he hears a violent rattling of the web of the spiller. Even from the distance he can see a foaming swirl in the water, it getting churned frothy and slapping high on the piling of the haul down.

Capstan he gives a terrible yell, and he jumps into the kitchen, and he grabs his rifle, and he goes surging back to that trap. He runs along the narrow plank of the lead like a hound, though he is over six foot and weights over two hundred.

But he arrives up too late. He's just

crossing the planks of the heart when he seen a giant sea lion that would weigh clost to a ton, the water just boiling red with the fish he'd killed just for fun, go plunging slam bang through the side of the spiller, tearing a hole a fathom or more wide.

When Capstan gets to the edge of the spiller, the lion is a hundred yards away, plunging and rearing frantic to free himself of some of the gear he'd towed out with him. The fish-killer gets free and dives just as Capstan fires. So he don't hit the lion none, account of the distance and the lion plunging so.

Capstan does get a very good look at this giant lion. They is a big dirty scar running cross ways of this lion's head. Capstan and this here identical lion had tangled before, and now, for the second time, Capstan he loses out.

Capstan he stands there just numb. They wasn't a single Tyee salmon left in that spiller. Six-seven thousand dollars worth of fish had swum away to freedom through that gaping hole. You could 'a' drug a fish scow through it.

When I arrive up beside the spiller, paddling in a two-man skin *bidarka* boat, Capstan is setting plenty dejected on the watch deck, holding his head between them two big hands of his'n. I climbs the ladder, and seeing instant what had happened—that gaping hole in the spiller and no fish—I sets down beside Capstan, but I don't say nothing. This here Capstan—I know him well—he hain't a party that you can go to lollygagging and sympathizing over.

Final, this Capstan raises up his head and his face is miserable. "I just can't tell Pil Yakso Kitty about this here, Dode," he says to me pitiful. "I just can't. We was aiming to have a new red carpet, dresses for Pil Yakso, and a radium to listen to. I just hain't cargin' the sand to tell her."

"Let's get to considering of that later, Capstan," I says to him. "I come over here to see you bent on business. They's

a motion picture concern come squandering in here two-three days ago, and this outfit hunts us up official, and they asks us can we secure for 'em a big *skookum* gent that's got plenty *tumtum* and hain't afraid of nothing. They got a scene they want a *skookum* party for to double for the hero in, figuring accurate the man that plays this here hero in the regular dramy can't cut the bait."

This Capstan begins to kind of set up goggle-eyed at this here. "I figure the description of the kind of a gent they want, plenty *tumtum*, a *skookum* party, fits you very accurate, Capstan. You're far from a invalid. I've knowed you since you was a troublesome boy, six-seven year old, and I hain't aware of no time, or place, where you quit out or quilled up before danger."

"Well, Dode," Capstan says, pleased, though he won't let on, "for what sort of activities am I wanted to enact in this here dramy?"

"Simple, Capstan," I says, "just to enact in your old line of business, to kill a giant sea lion by hand, with a walrus spear."

Capstan he jumps up excited, and he fetches a look down into the spiller, at that gash in the side where his fish had went out of, and he just yells: "Whereabouts is this outfit? Leave us go hurried, Dode. I'm ready to-perform in this here dramy, and do it prompt and emphatic."

But just as sudden as he gets excited, he cools right down.

"I don't know about it after all, Dode," he says. "If I enact in this dramy, I got to do it furtive, sneaking and secretive. Pil Yakso wouldn't allow of it. When I and her married, three year ago, me having worked then sea-lion killing five years for the salmon association, she made me promise—me having just then got tore up right smart by the identical lion that wrecked my trap today—never to hunt a lion again. I just dassen't tell her, Dode."

We set a minute and don't say nothing. "I tell you what, Dode," he says. "You lie for me. You're plenty capable. You just tell Pil Yakso you got a job of work for me, three-four days, whatever it is, leaving her think I'm working deputy, serving papers, anything. You do that, Dode. I'm honing to enact in this dramy, for the purposes of earning a dollar and getting even."

I says I'll lie for him a whole lot, and meant it then, and we go up to the *barabara*, and I never in all my life feels more sorrier for a man than I did when this big hulk of a Capstan forces himself to tell this little red-head woman, they hain't got no more fish in the spiller than she's got in the kitchen.

She just goes fish-belly white at that, Pil Yakso does, for a minute, but she's gamer than banty roosters, and she stands tiptoe, her being no more than a doll alongside of Capstan, and he picks her up in his arms, and I turn away decent not to be observing vulgar at this tender and touching scene between them two, and she says again and again not to mind, she don't need no dress, and they got along prior without no carpet, and if they had a radium to listen to they might hear unpleasant things, and he sets her down onto the floor.

Then this Capstan goes into the lean-to for to make up the pack of what he aims to take along, and this Pil Yakso she pins me for information.

"As a special concession I'm allowing of Capstan to lie to me, Dode," she says. "But that privilege don't extend to you none. Spread the log. Whatever is it my man is a-going out on?"

Pil Yakso is one of them steady gray-eyed gals, with flaming red hair. You just dassen't lie to 'em. So I tells Pil Yakso brief what it is Capstan is aiming to enact into this dramy. She kind of shivers, but when Capstan comes out of the lean-to with his pack, she greets

him cheerful, kisses him three-four times, and away we go in my skin boat.



CAPSTAN he meets the director, the *hyas tyee* of this picture outfit, and this party explains to Capstan what he wants exact. Seems this here dramy is a story of the *ahnkuttie*, the times of long ago. The villain, spurned by the lovely lady, he organizes to take a terrible revenge. He abducts off the gal, and he takes her out and leaves her on one of the bleak reef islands where the sea lions haul out, aiming to get her devoured.

Of course, in this dramy, just in time, the hero he comes seething acrost the channel in a skin boat, and he jumps ashore, and he kills two-three lions with a spear, and just when the lovely heroine, who's clinging desperate to the cliff side to keep away from lions, is about to let go all holts and fall down in amongst 'em and get sliced up for fish bait.

Capstan he picks out the reef island for the director, and they is a sharp cliff in the middle for the heroine to cling to, and at the foot of the cliff is kind of a rock hollow where the sea lions lay and bask. Oh, this Capstan knows where to locate them sea lions.

They hold a preliminary rehearsal. They'd took the leading lady, Mary Bodine they called her, around to the west end of this reef island and helped her up onto the cliff quiet so not to disturb the lions that was quilled up in the sun there just a bit west of the foot of this high rock.

With the lovely lady clinging to the cliff, Capstan he climbs into a skin boat, and he showed 'em what they wanted—action. He just jumps this skin boat clean out of the water with every paddle dip. He just goes foaming acrost that channel and the director is delirious glad.

When Capstan hits the beach, the di-

rector calls out to him that that is all for the time, as he just wants to work out the timing of the action.

We all come back, and Capstan he sets on the shore with a pair of binoculars, studying this rocky island he'd selected. He wanted to be dead sure of his lions, and know just about where they are quilled up, so's to tell the camera men where they can set up without disturbing the fish killers and at the same time, be sure of getting their pictures.

Meantime they've brung Mary Bodine back from the cliff. She says she just won't stay clinging to that cliff no longer, and her hands is raw, and she almost let go her holts as it was, she says, and she don't like her job of work in this dramy, and tells the director so emphatic.

But he talks to her, and mollifies her down, and puts his arm around her, and they go walking off down the slope talking it over.

Capstan he still sets there on the beach, observing at the island, and watching every move as a lion crawls over a rock, and notes the direction them lions go.

After a while Capstan he tells the director to send his camera men over, and indicates the places where they can set up their gear. Then, purty soon, we seen the boat putting out again with the lovely heroine, headed for the far west end of the reef island so she can get back to her cliff again.

All hands wait a while longer, and then, when from the distance we can see this heroine clinging to the rock, Capstan tells the director we can begin to perform.

A fast boat follers as Capstan goes surging and tearing acrost that channel again, two cameras working on him as he jumps that kaiak out of the salt chuck with every dip.

Hitting shore reckless, like the director told him, Capstan he goes swarming up the bank, a walrus spear in his fist. Two-three camera men follow lively

as they can, figuring one will get the shots if the others don't.

Capstan he just jumps in over amongst the rocks, and, sure enough, there is a couple of sea lions, only they hain't big ones. Them lions go floundering lively in the direction of the cliff, which is where they want 'em.

Capstan he fetches a look, and he seen the lovely lady was clinging precarious to her place on the cliff, and away he goes. In just no time he arrives up clost to the foot of the cliff, and as he jumps around a boulder, two more lions rear up, and go on the same direction with the others, toward the rock bowl at the bottom of the cliff, and two of the four lions is little ones, and one is medium, and one weighs clost to a ton, and has got a dirty gray scar running cross ways of its head.

He makes his last jump, his spear all poised and organized, and he lands in the edge of the rock bowl, and he seen, and we all seen, this wasn't no play acting at all. Here is four sea lions in this bowl, and this girl just can't hang in her place many seconds longer. She looks down pitiful. If she falls she'll land amongst them lions, and they'll shred her all up in ten seconds.

Now this giant lion, with the scar, and he's a natural killer, he seen the girl, and he starts to climb right up where she was. It's all ways amazing how a seal, a sea lion, and even a walrus will shin up rocks you never would dream they could go. They got kind of a suction in them flippers that gives them a holt.

Singing out to the heroine encouraging, Capstan he goes to the front. He jumps in amongst them lions, and the first drive of that spear he rips one wide open, and tosses him aside deader than a last year shark egg.

The second lion turns on Capstan. It gnashes its tusks, makes a rush at him. He kind of side steps, gives it the *chuk-kin*, lays him cold.

But that girl is whimpering terrified there on the cliff. She just kind of moans to "hurry! hurry!"

"Hang tough!" Capstan yells to her. "Hang tough!"

And goes for number three.

Meantime, this number three lion still being in the way between Capstan and the big killer, the scar head lion is climbing higher and higher.

Capstan makes a jab at number three, and—misses. It comes at him vicious, it being a medium size lion at that. Capstan he just hurls himself aside in time. It is amazing how fast them critters move. This one, as it goes by, makes a slashing rip at Capstan's leg, but before he can turn Capstan is onto him, drives the spear clean down between his shoulders, yanks it out.

Then Capstan he surely do go after the big boy, that was almost in tearing reach of the girl's legs. Capstan he does some cliff climbing himself, and he does it lively, and he drives that spear into the left side of the big killer, the spear head coming out on the right, and Capstan and the lion they fall down the cliff together.

This Capstan, almost smashed under the weight of this lion, claws his way out, and none too soon. He reaches up them long spar arms, and he catches the lovely

heroine as she falls, her not able a instant longer to cling on that cliff.

This Capstan gazes down plumb amazed at the lovely, sobbing burden in his arms. It's Pil Yakso Kitty Culber-son.

Sure it was Pil Yakso. She just couldn't stand the suspense after she'd made me tell what Capstan was aiming to do. She follered, and set up amongst the rocks where Capstan couldn't see her. This director he come along, with Mary Bodine, and he was making endeavors to coax and placate this Mary.

"I won't work in the piece," Mary says stubborn. "That's that. It's too dangerous."

This director pleads tearful with Mary, but he can't budge her none.

Pil Yakso, setting there in the rocks, she overhears this. "I'll do that job of work for you," Pil Yakso says to the director. "Sure. The lion hunter you got is my man, Capstan Culber-son. I got plenty *tumtum* similar to him, I'll do the job of work hanging to that cliff.

"You will!" this distracted director just howls. "You will! You do this shot for me and I'll give you and your man, Capstan, a thousand dollars a piece."

And that's how, exact, Pil Yakso Kitty Culber-son got her terrible red carpet, her new dress, and a radium for to listen to.





THE GREATEST BUCKING HORSE

By C. B. Roth

THIS is the story of the greatest bucking horse that ever lived. His name was Hightower. He had never been ridden, although nearly every great rider of the day had tried to—and in the process several had lost their lives. A real outlaw horse is like a man-eating tiger: once he kills he develops a liking for it. Hightower's reputation as a killer was widespread.

Col. William F. Cody, then at the top of his fame as Buffalo Bill, bought Hightower as an attraction for his Wild West Show. With the show were many good riders, but the rule about Hightower was that no man should be asked to try to ride him oftener than once a month. And no rider in the show ever stayed on his back more than two seconds.

Strangely, there was one rider with the show who hadn't ever tried to ride Hightower. His name was Frank T. Hopkins. None of the other riders could match Hopkins for daring or skill, but for reasons of his own Colonel Cody had never brought horse and man together.

The inevitable had to happen. You can't keep the best rider in the world away from the worst horse in the world forever. The showdown came in Keene, New Hampshire.



HERE is the rest of the story, told by the only survivor of that duel, Mr. Hopkins himself, now living in Long Island City, New York.

Said Mr. Hopkins: "When the colonel said that to me, I was rather pleased. I have always liked a good game horse, and Hightower surely was one. But I answered: 'You don't suppose he's going to hurt me, do you, Colonel?'"

"I remember overhearing the colonel telling some of his guests at the dinner-table: 'It's a good performance when two bad actors meet. I've been keeping this fellow off that horse all season for such an occasion as this. The horse has never been ridden for more than two jumps by any man.'"

"I went into the horse-top and told the head horseman that he was to turn Hightower into the ring for me when the buckers were let loose.

"This was not a rodeo—we didn't use squeeze pens for our buckers; every man had to rope his own horse in the ring in front of the audience; hog him down by drawing his two hind feet together, saddle him and step up in his middle—and ride him. And we didn't have sixteen-inch bulges in our saddles to hold us in, either.

"Well, I roped, threw, saddled and mounted Hightower. Did he buck! There was no whistle blowing at the end of ten seconds, no pick-up men ready to ride in and snub the horse and pull me off to safety. It was horse or man. He bucked around the ring for twenty minutes. Bucked as only Hightower, of all the horses I've known, could buck.

"Blood was flying from my nose and ears. It seemed he never would stop. But he did. He came to a dead standstill, but then I was as blind as a bat. I was afraid to try to get off. I could just make out Cody's voice saying: 'Climb off, Frank.'"

"But I thought the horse was only sulking and was ready at any time to whoop her up again, so I just kept my pants glued in the leather and waited. Some of the other boys rode up, dragged me from the saddle. To the hospital they carried me. I was laid up for a week.

"I never saw Hightower again. He did not leave the ring alive. In his fury to get rid of me, he broke some arteries inside and bled to death through the nose.

"I have seen many bucking horses in rodeos in this country and in Mexico, but I never saw a buckler that was the equal of Hightower. Some of the younger riders tell me: 'But they do it different now, Pop, than they did in your day.' Maybe so. But it's a sure thing they get unloaded easier, too."



MR. HOPKINS is probably the greatest American horseman of all time, the winner of more honors for riding than any other American. He won over four hundred long distance races; three times he won, in competition with picked rid-

ers from all over the world, the title of "World's Champion Horseman."

His opinion of the comparison between the bucking horses of his youth and the present is interesting. He told me: "The bigger horses of today can hurt you more, but they don't buck nearly as hard nor so fast as the smaller mustangs we used to ride. The reason is that they are mostly forced buckers. Bucking is their trade. The horses I rode bucked from fear and hatred. And they really bucked."

Eight years ago, Mr. Hopkins, long retired from riding and an elderly man, went to Philadelphia to see the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition. Like the needle in a compass seeking the lodestone, he went to the horse quarters. A rodeo company had the concession, and the old champion fell to talking bucking horses with the new ones. Mr. Hopkins defended the horses and men of his day; the youngsters defended men and horses of theirs. And before Mr. Hopkins knew exactly how it came about, they had him up on one of their best buckers.

He rode the horse. He rode others. He had them bring out the worst horses of the outfit; and he rode them all, though these were the horses that were in the habit of piling the best young riders.

Well, why not? The man who could ride Hightower would find other bucking horses tame in comparison. There never was a buckler like Hightower.



THE CAMP-FIRE

Where readers, writers and adventurers meet



HOW and where writers work seems to be a subject that gets attention anywhere. Young writers are always inquiring about the working habits of established story-spinners; the writers' magazines give the matter much attention; and the reading public has a natural interest in the men who provide the reading.

Charles Molyneux Brown, whose "Britches Spree" we printed a while back, visited Raymond Spears, and writes us about him. Spears' workshop is famous in the fiction business, and we knew about his notes and data on almost anything. When a question comes to *Ask Adventure* that nobody can answer, it is usual practice to send it on to Raymond Spears. I think he's never been stumped yet. But here is our first close-up view of his workshop:

While sojourning in California I had the very great pleasure of making the acquaintance of Raymond S. Spears, the old "rivuh rat", and visiting with him in his two room workshop structure built in the rear of his neat bungalow residence in Inglewood. It occurred to me that *Adventure* readers, who have enjoyed so many of his Mississippi River and shantyboat stories, as well as tales of sheepherding and western adventures, might like a first-hand picture of the jovial

gentleman's workshop and something about himself. I found both very interesting.

I was heartily welcomed by a hearty chap in knickers, a bit Mark Twainish as to hair and facial characteristics, Falstaffian as to contours of figure, and invited to find a seat in the workshop. We chatted about this and that, and familiar grounds. Memphis, on the Mississippi, has always been my home and a lot of Ray Spears' yarns centered on the river about that spot.

All the time we talked, my eyes were wide and busy. I've visited quite a few writing chaps in their offices, dens, workshops, waiting wells or whatever they choose to call the spots where they torture words from typewriters, but this layout was unique, and a sort of a cross between the stack room of some library and the archives of one of those magazine exchanges you find in out of the way spots in cities.

The workshop is housed in a shack built on the rear of his lot, some twelve by eighteen feet and divided into two rooms. The eight walls, with the exception of door and window apertures, are lined with shelves from floor to ceiling. And stuffed into those shelves are several tons of old manuscript carbon copies, box files, old newspapers, files of clippings, correspondence and many, many magazines. The overflow is in piles on the floor. Two or three bear traps hang about from rusty chains, a knife of bolo proportions sticks in the window frame and a pair of handcuffs swing from a nail. Some forestry posters and a reward notice; a canteen and a knapsack.

My host, sensing my curiosity, told me a bit about the collection, smiling as he teetered

in an old swivel chair upholstered with cushions, an old army blanket and other padding to accommodate his own idea of comfort when banging the typewriter.

In the days when he went actively swinging up and down the country from the Adirondacks to the Gulf, and from Carolina to California, poking into the out-of-the-way places with his pack on his back and his pockets full of notebooks, Ray Spears accumulated many, many pages of notes; pegs to hang fine yarns on in later years. He supplemented these notes with clippings from newspapers published in those areas, and believe it or not, he can lay hand on yellowed clippings, mouldy note books and most anything he wants in that conglomeration without a lot of digging around. He even dug up, when the subject was later mentioned, some clippings from a newspaper from my own home town having to do with the exploits of a gentleman who gave the law there a heck of a lot of trouble when I was quite a young man. Ray knew more about that chap's doings than I did. He'd used him, in yarns.

In addition to the immense storehouse of data like that, there were file copies of various outdoor magazines, containing departments edited by himself; questions and answer dope and advice to the lads burning with adventure yens. Ray can tell you the proper outfit to scrape together for a float down the Mississippi' from source to the deltas below New Orleans; what to pack along if you yearn to roam the desert for gold; or the best way to keep out of trouble if curiosity leads you into the out-of-the-way places in the Tennessee and Kentucky mountains, where natives still aren't enthusiastic about strangers. And it's all authentic and based on been-there experience, believe you me!

Once, he tells me, he moved. Rather than pack up all that accumulation of a scribe's life, he had the darned shack skidded up on a big truck and transplanted to the new location. In the main the experiment was a success, but a lot of stuff got badly scrambled, shaking out shelves. When I saw how he'd crammed it back, I knew he wasn't kidding me.

There's many a yarn in those shelves yet, lurking in a moulded notebook; coily hiding in a yellowed clipping, and though there are descendants of the voyager camped around close to his bungalow and grandchildren poking into his workshop now and then, just a look at his ruddy and hearty countenance is enough to convince anyone that there'll be many a yarn woven in that odd workshop to journey to the presses before the cover is put

on the typewriter for good. And by the way, to lessen the fatigue of turning out thousands of words of fiction, and fact for his departments in various magazines, Ray has an electric typewriter.

A lot of folks find their way to that workshop in the back yard. Adventurers, writers and visiting comrades of the stream and trail. Ray welcomes 'em all with his hearty smile and big laugh. But—business of whispering—he's mortal afeared that some day, some chap who's taken his advice about a jaunt to the far places and encountered more adventure than even an enthusiastic tenderfoot bargained for, may come calling with a shotgun in his hand and murder in his heart.

GIFFORD S. CHAMBERLAIN, of San Gabriel, California, is a knowing man about guns. This correspondence between him and Georges Surdez is of general interest.

Regarding Georges Surdez's story, "Fools for Glory," there are several details in this story, which have to do with machine-guns, that I would appreciate further information about.

I am deeply interested in military small arms. When a tale comes up which deals with this subject I am all eyes and ears. It is a relief to read a story which has its characters handle arms that belong to them.

He speaks of a machine-gun in the hands of natives, presumed to be a model 1915; obsolete and doubtless a captured gun. You further stated that it was identified by the heavy discharge of a larger caliber and the characteristics of its explosion sound.

What really caught my eye was the mention of the half moon tin clips.

I'm familiar enough with most guns, so that when I read about a Lebel, my subconscious mind automatically tosses out the facts. Rather long and clumsy; tubular magazine; triangular splinter of a bayonet; heavier than any other standard military arm; first small bore smokeless powder piece adopted by any government; not particularly accurate; etc., etc.

When this 1915 obsolete showed up I couldn't readily visualize it.

I got out my dope and pictures and started hunting. I caught a 1914 Hotchkiss, but it handled a straight clip. The nearest I got to a gun using a curved, semi-circular loading device was the "Madsen" of Denmark. This gun is the same caliber, however, as the Hotchkiss, 8mm (.315 in.)

I finally ran down a notation about the Fusil Mitrailleur (Chauchard) light machine gun made obsolete by the adoption of the Chatellerault. The only mention of loading was that it was of the charger type holding 20 rounds. Would this be the gun he speaks of? Would the Chatellerault be the one which in U.S. is called the "Show Show" or "Chat-Chat"? I do know that the latter gun is a 7.5mm and loads with a straight type box magazine holding 25 rounds and is inserted vertically into the top of the gun. The former (Chauchard) is about 7.65mm.

Thanks for any information and the enjoyment derived from Surdez's splendid stories.

Mr. Surdez's reply:

For the automatic weapon used by the natives in my story "Fools For Glory", I had in mind the Fusil Mitrailleur Chauchard, as you surmised. This weapon was employed by the French Army throughout the World War, or rather from 1916 onward. I have photographs of it taken in the autumn of 1918, using the half-moon, twenty cartridges magazine. A number of those guns fell into native hands at various times, especially when Morocco was held by Territorial troops during the period when the active Colonial Army was doing various important jobs of work around Verdun and Somme.

I have before me the instruction manuals of the French Army from 1914 to 1921, and can confirm that the Chauchard was the weapon in use. The detonations of that type of arm could be distinguished from others with ease. But, as a matter of fact, the natives very seldom employed them, due to their extreme difficulty in obtaining sufficient ammunition to feed automatic guns. But they occasionally used them and most efficiently. There were veterans of the famous Moroccan Division serving among them, men trained by European instructors.

You refer to the Madsen automatic gun of Denmark. The Madsen was used for several years by the Foreign Legion, throughout the Riff campaign, for instance. Those I saw used straight clip magazines, however, not the half-moon. It is difficult to be sure of what weapon was used at a given time or place, however. Even manuals for use in the service are incorrect at times. One example: The booklet issued by Madsen with the guns makes mention of leather bottles holding water for cooling the barrel at intervals. Several officers and sergeants of the Legion who had worked the Madsen on active service

could not recall having ever seen them.

Your dope on the Lebel rifle (rather long and clumsy, heavier than any other standard military arm, not particularly accurate) reminds me of many arguments and several rows. Certain Legionnaires are great believers in the superiority of the Lebel. They will assure you that it was not noticeably heavier than the British rifle, and a better all-around weapon than the Mauser! You write that the Lebel has tubular magazines. Not all of them—the 1907-1915 type uses a loading clip, of five cartridges for the rifle and three for the carbine. Legionnaires generally prefer the 1886 tubular type.

The sub-machine gun or fusil mitrailleur now in use is, I believe, the Chatellerault, model 1924. I was delighted to get your letter. I enjoy putting such details in my stories, and I am glad to know there are some who enjoy getting them. As a matter of fact, any well-documented story of the Legion after 1915 should mention automatic weapons, rifle grenades, mortars, small cannon. The whole structure of the infantry was affected by their use, which also made the squad obsolete and brought out the combat group.

THIS is the hottest day of the year so far—July eleventh—and Dr. C. P. Fordyce, *Ask Adventure* expert on health and first aid, sends us this:

The prevention of heat stroke depends on swallowing two or three teaspoonsful of common salt in water during the day. Scientists have found that during excessive sweating a great quantity of salt is given out through the pores of the skin, disturbing the salt balance of the body and making one susceptible to heat exhaustion. The remedy is easy—take salt in through the stomach. This method is now used generally in industrial plants for prevention—a five-grain salt tablet is taken by the worker every time he takes a drink of water.

The above method has been worked out by scientists from Harvard University at the Boulder Dam.

FROM Corfu, Greece, Demetrio, C. Condi sends a long letter—“Comrade Nyvelt of Los Angeles asks for information regarding Ali Pasha Tepelenli”—giving the family tree and much other detail about the man who gathered one group of enemies (he had plenty)

at a banquet and murdered five hundred of them, and straightened out a family situation by roasting his mother's admirer alive on a spit. It is too long to print here, but valuable research material, and Comrade Nyvelt can have it by writing in for it.

More letters come in, and I regret we haven't room for all of them at the Camp-Fire, because they all have interests in various directions. I want to thank Thomas B. Hill, Supervisor, Department of Conservation and Development, Olympia, Washington; William K. Boone, Jr., of Jalapa, Mexico; Dorothy M. Johnson, Menasha, Wisconsin; Clyde E. Wiley, Champaign, Illinois; Thomas H. Dorey, Montreal, Quebec; E. P. McBroom, St. Louis, Missouri; Edward A. Logsdon, Long Beach, California; Lewis W. Knowles, New York City; Ralph Lewis, Franklin, Virginia.

AT the last Camp-Fire I announced that our twenty-fifth anniversary issue would include "Riley Grannan's Last Adventure" and Talbot Mundy's "The Soul of a Regiment", and that other titles would be published as soon as selected. Here's another one for us.

The demand for a Piperock yarn has been almost unanimous. I asked W. C. Tuttle to pick his favorite, and he chooses "When East Met West", which tells of Magpie and Dirty Shirt and the elephants.

"Good luck with that issue," he writes. "I'm still knocking along on the Hashknife serial. Today the thermometer was 112 on my porch. But it often hits 118 out here. When it does we put ice-packs on the horned toads."

A. S. H. came in yesterday, to lunch and talk over the November milestone. He has a paternal interest in that anniversary—he'll be with us at Camp-Fire, leading the talk. He remarked that a few months ago he read "The Soul of a Regiment" again, and many times as he has read it, it still gets under his skin.

He's liked Friel's recent yarns, thinks Gordon Young is doing the best writing of his career.

PHIL WESTHOFF, of Papeete, Tahiti, sent an appeal to the comrades—an appeal right from the throat. He asked if anyone could tell him how to keep his beer cool under those palm trees, without ice or electricity, without importing any expensive machine—just a good simple home-made way of keeping down the temperature of that beverage when all around is hot. He writes again:

I wish to congratulate you upon the efficiency of your *Ask Adventure* department. Some time ago I sent you an inquiry, and I surely stirred up a hornet's nest. Besides your own letter I received five others from widely separated parts of the U. S., New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, California and Washington. Three of the suggestions are worth trying, they are home-made devices, and being a mechanic I can make them myself.

All the letters I received were very gentlemanly, helpful and sympathetic.

I thank you for helping me.

AND those weren't all. We printed a letter from Nova Scotia giving complete directions, and I recall another that came in from Buenos Aires, and one other from Cuba. The whole incident gives a cheerful picture of human nature.

Here's a man in the South Seas, where we've all at times hankered to go because we understand that there Nature smiles and no cares exist, except maybe one about how to keep beer cool. And here and there in harder spots of the world, men who probably have humdrum jobs and wearing routines, and who'll never see the South Seas, sit down at desks and tables and write letters to help out that stranger on the golden sands. I guess we'll agree that there is a brotherhood of man around this Camp-Fire. May Phil Westhoff keep his beer cool!

—H. B.

ASK ADVENTURE

for information you can't get elsewhere



THE spider is everywhere on land, sea,
on the heights and in the deep.

Request:—Is there a country anywhere, besides the Far North, where there are no spiders of any kind?

Are there any sections in the tropics or semi-tropics where there are no spiders?

Please give me information also about where venomous spiders are more numerous.

—S. WEBSTER, Houston, Texas

Reply by Dr. S. W. Frost:—Spiders are abundant wherever insects occur. Since they feed chiefly on insects and other arthropods, their presence is essential. I know of no place where spiders do not occur except at very high altitudes and in extreme northern latitudes. They and especially their near relatives, the scorpions and solpugids, are more abundant in warmer climates and especially in the tropics.

Even under adverse circumstances, one is often surprised to find them. They have occasionally been blown to the far north and have been found above the Arctic Circle even as far north as North East Land, latitude 80°.

The young of certain species take to the air during the autumn and are known as ballooning spiders. They climb to an elevated position and spin forth a quantity of silk until it is sufficient to lift the weight of the spider. Then they release their hold and go drifting through the air.

Some dig into the sand of the desert to

avoid the intense heat at noon day. Blind spiders may be found in the caves of the earth. Certain species submerge beneath the water where they live in comfort avoiding many of their enemies. These spiders build silken diving bells which they fill with air carried down from the surface as bubbles between their abdomen and hind legs. This supply of air lasts them for several hours then they come to the surface for a new supply. Others live in coral reefs and come out at low tide to feed on small crustaceans.

Spiders and insects have succeeded in adapting themselves to all kinds of living and I doubt if there is any place in this world, where foliage occurs, that one could not find spiders.

A FINE-TOOTHED comb for the
needle in the haystack but a pick
and shovel for buried treasure.

Request:—Could you give me some information regarding methods and devices for locating buried gold, or tell me where I can get the desired information?

—GEORGE HAMPTON, Miami, Fla.

Reply by Commander Edward Ellsberg:—It is unlikely that any really satisfactory or reliable method of locating buried gold exists. Most of the reputed rigs, whether rods or otherwise, are undoubtedly frauds and worthless. Several such devices were tried out by the Artiglio, in searching for the *Egypt* and her cargo of bullion, with no results except a loss of considerable time. They finally found her by the old, laborious method of dragging.

The best method I know of for buried treasure ashore is the counterpart of the drag—that is, the pick and shovel and a long rod for sounding, all used with going over the ground thoroughly and methodically. It

took two years to find the *Egypt's* treasure, and I believe that a realistic attempt ashore might as well figure on at least that much time for their search.

Seismograph instruments and adaptions of radio equipment have been used with considerable success in the oil fields to locate new structures for drilling, but in these cases, the bodies to be located, salt domes and the like, have been of considerable magnitude and have lent themselves fairly well to the reflection of the sound or electrical impulses sent out. It is unlikely that any small body of buried gold would do so with sufficient volume to be detected.

There is one case reported at some length, where such a device is stated to have given excellent results in the hands of a Lieut. George Williams, late of the British service, last reported as living at Ancon, C. Z. Williams is the designer of the apparatus, which in his hands has been used to locate a considerable amount of buried treasure around old Panama, working on a concession from the Panamanian Government. If this interests you, you will find this case described in considerable detail, together with the objects recovered in "Doubloons" by Charles Driscoll, which no doubt you can see in any library, or obtain from the publishers, Farrar & Rinehart, New York, N. Y.

ESKIMO women chew the boot!

Request:—As you are listed as an authority on Eskimos, possibly you could tell me where a pair of shoes, the kind they wear, could be purchased.

A friend of mine is a great fisherman and has bought nearly every kind of shoe that is supposed to be absolutely waterproof but complains he has found none.

I've heard of a shoe made of walrus or seal, the joints being chewed together by Eskimo women. These shoes were absolutely waterproof.

If you can enlighten me as to where I can get a pair either in the United States or elsewhere, it would be appreciated.

—CHARLES C. MARDEN, Trenton, N. J.

Reply:—Eskimo skin boots will not leak in a thin slush of wet snow, and that is as waterproof as one needs, or can get. They vary a bit depending on where you get them—also are termed differently. For example, in Greenland and Baffinland they are known as "kamicks"; while in northern Alaska they are called "mukluks". But they all have this in common, when native-made: the entire

boot is chewed soft by the native women who make them (not just the seams alone) and are sewed together with sinew usually obtained from the leg of the reindeer, or barren-ground caribou.

Further, in the far north, due to low temperatures, the native boot is made double; the outer boot of common seal, tanned with hair off and soled with the thick tough hide of the Harp seal (ookjuk), and an inner very soft boot, usually of dogskin tanned with the hair on and with that hair turned in to be next the foot and leg of the wearer. This is true of the mukluk, when native made, as well as of the kamick.

The mukluk used generally in Alaska by white prospectors, hunters and trappers is a single boot much as described above, but may be made by white shoemakers from the native pattern. They are waterproof as a rule, though one can't vouch for anything but the native boot as being absolutely waterproof. At least, I couldn't.

The only places I know to get the Greenland or Baffinland boot is either of some trader on the Labrador coast, or Newfoundland; or of Anthony Fiala, who is an outfitter of arctic explorers. Address the Fiala Outfits, Inc., 26 Warren St., New York, N. Y. I'll add also, that you might get the address of some Canadian trader who has them, of Patrick Lee, of our *Ask Adventure Department*.

You can obtain mukluks of M. A. Pinska, Front St., Fairbanks, Alaska.

Sorry I can't name any prices. You'll have to have your friend write to the above addresses himself for data.

RACING motorcycles are "souped" up.

Request:—Where could I get books on the Harley-Davidson and Indian motorcycles?

Where could I get parts to soup up motorcycles, in other words, racing parts?

Could a force feed oil pump such as a Chevrolet oil pump be put on an Indian motorcycle in place of the old hand pump? If not what would take place of the hand oil pump?

—DORREEL JOHNSON, Lewiston, Mich.

Reply by Mr. Charles M. Dodge:—The very best place for you to write for books regarding either motorcycle or motorcycle motors would be either of the two factories. Their addresses are: Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Company, Milwaukee, Wis., and Indian Motorcycle Company, Highland Station, Springfield, Mass.

If you have access to one of the older

Henderson, Ace or Super X motorcycles, I suggest you drop a line to Henderson Motorcycles Sales Company, Diversey Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

While the Henderson is not now being manufactured, the above company handle parts for the ones that are still on the road, and the other two factories will be more than glad to send you catalogs, Instruction Books and any further data you may want to know about any of their respective motorcycles. If you have a motorcycle now, as I assume you may have from your questions, be sure to give the motor number from the lower left side of the motor base in writing either factory.

On road machines the hand oil pump is all that is necessary for practically any speed you will make. Up to fifty-five or sixty miles per hour you don't need to use it at all, as most motorcycles have an automatic oil pump feeding one drop through from the tank for every twenty-seven revolutions of the motor at any speed under about sixty. If you are hitting it up for any length of time on the road, then about half a shot from the hand oil gun on the tank is sufficient.

The four cylinder motorcycle of today—the Indian—has the force feed oiling already, as do the racing and hill climbing machines. I would suggest you get one of these units from a racing-motorcycle dealer, rather than experiment with the Chevrolet oil pump as you mention. Automobile parts do not work out well on motorcycles. Many of the boys have tried them, and in some instances they work after a fashion. But it is a cut-and-try proposition at best, and since the necessary equipment for building up force feed oiling in a twin is not too expensive, your best bet would certainly be to get in touch with some of the racers who have been all through this experimental stage, and can furnish you with what you want that will perform satisfactorily.

There is a firm in Los Angeles, Calif., who make a specialty of racing needs. It is the Clymer Motors, 434 West Pico St., Los Angeles, Calif. They also carry a line of books that will interest you.

There is another outfit in Chicago which can tell you prices on any such equipment immediately, and which are reputed to supply good parts: The Chicago Racing Equipment Corporation, 160 North La Salle St., Room 903, Burnham Bldg., Chicago, Ill. Another one is the Indian Motorcycle Sales, Kansas City, Mo., and another is the Crandall Hicks Company, 720 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Mass., though the last named do not carry racing parts.

Let me know of anything further I can help you with at anytime, and good luck to you with the racing.

SINCE the shooting stopped the Indian population in Arizona and New Mexico has increased.

Request:—Will you send me a list of the tribes of New Mexico and of Arizona with the original and present day populations of each? Could you tell if the Hualpais of Arizona are a Yuman tribe, or if it is merely another way of spelling Walapi, the Hopi pueblo.

I would appreciate it if you could give me some facts about the Indian wars of Arizona and New Mexico. I would like to know if the Zias or Lias are a Pueblo tribe, and if they dwell in New Mexico or Chihuahua. Can you give me some information about Cochise and Victorio, the Apache chiefs?

—RONALD LUNDIE, Ashford, England.

You ask for a list of the Indians of New Mexico and Arizona with the *original* and present day population of each tribe. What do you mean by "original"? The Indians have been here for many more generations than the white man and so far as I know were never counted. The old Spanish Conquistadores gave populations to some of the Indian tribes but they were mere guesses.

I will give you a list of the tribes in the two states, the linguistic stock and the approximate present population. I do not have absolute figures. Most of them are from the 1930 census however.

New Mexico

Apaches—Jicarilla and Mescalero bands. (Athapaskan) -----6100

Lipan (Athapaskan) -----less than 50

Navajo (Athapaskan) In Arizona and New Mexico. In 1863 there were less than 10,000. Now about 45,000.

Pueblos—21 Pueblos of four stocks: Tañao, Tigua, Jemez and Queres. In 1805 the population was 6,083 and in 1930 it was 9,213.

Arizona

Navajo. See above.

Apache (Athapaskan). See above.

Hopi (Shoshonean) -----Approx. 1900

Walapi (Yuman) -----500

Chimehueva (Shoshonean) -----300

Mohave (Yuman) -----1500

Yuma (Yuman) -----655

Cocopah (Yuman) about 800, mostly over in Lower California.

Pima (Piman) -----3936

Maricopa (Yuman)	350
Papago (Piman)	4980
Zuni (Zunian)	1600
Havasupai	175

The above are largely from memory, but I think contains all of the tribes and almost exactly the populations.

"Hualpais" as you spell it is the same as the "Walapi" listed above. Their reservation lies far west of the Hopi country along the south bank of the Grand Canyon. The Arizona end of the great Boulder dam is on their reservation.

If I should attempt to tell you of the Indian wars of Arizona and New Mexico in any detail it would take quite a book. The most concise story I have run across takes twenty-eight pages in a printed book.

Suffice to say that from the first settlers in Arizona, and especially after 1864, up to 1886 there was a continuous warfare between the settlers and the Indians. Beginning in the sixties the U. S. Government sent soldiers to the Territory, and they helped keep the Indians in order, but were much handicapped by the nature of the country and often by orders from Washington. However, in 1886 most of the "hostiles" were rounded up and several hundred deported, held as prisoners of war, first at Fort Pickens in Florida, where the climate was so severe on the desert bred Indian that many of them sickened and died. They were later moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and remained there, and a few years ago those who wished, were sent back to the Mescalero reservation in New Mexico where they now are. The balance remained at Fort Sill.

In New Mexico there was trouble in the early days with the Apaches, especially under Mangas Colorado, but that was settled along with the general settlement of the Apaches in Arizona. The Navajos were troublesome in the early day, and treaty after treaty was made and broken, and finally in 1864 when the troops had been moved out of the Territory during the Civil War they got so bad that a regiment was recruited from the settlers and put under command of the famous scout, "Kit Carson," who was commissioned Colonel of the Regiment, which was known as the 1st New Mexico Volunteers. Knowing the Indians and their country he followed them relentlessly, killing their stock, cutting down their fruit trees, killed their corn fields, and finally they came in by bands and surrendered. They were taken to what was known as the Bosque Redondo, there kept as prisoners for several years. There were about 9,000 of them. They were finally released, and each family given some sheep and

goats, etc., and since then they have been peaceful Indians. There may have been 1,000 not rounded up, so since 1867 they have increased from about 10,000 to over 45,000.

Cochise.

Cochise was a Chiricahua Apache chief. He gave no trouble to Americans until after he went in 1861, under a flag of truce, to the camp of soldiers to deny that his people had abducted a white child. The commanding officer ordered the visiting chiefs bound because they would not confess. One was killed and four caught including Cochise. He however escaped, carrying three bullets in his body, by cutting through the tent in which he was confined. He organized some of his tribesmen and began hostilities. The troops were forced to retreat and settlements in Arizona were laid waste. About this time the troops were called back east because of the Civil War. The Apaches were then convinced that to prevent white settlement was to fight. Cochise and Magnas Colorado tried to prevent California troops from entering Arizona when they tried to open communication through Arizona but were put to flight. When the troops returned a war of extermination was entered upon against the Apache. Finally Cochise came in and surrendered in September 1871. He again went on the war path for a few months but again surrendered in 1872 and died in 1874.

Victorio.

He was one of the lieutenants of Cochise and was with him in his raids and fighting. When the government tried to concentrate the Apaches on reservations in 1877, some 1500 of them under Victorio divided up into predatory bands and scattered over the country. The next year Victorio gave up and with his followers came into camp. Another attempt was made to move the Indians to San Carlos, but again they fled. Later they came to Mescalero, N. M., but the local authorities found indictments against Victorio and some of his chiefs, charging them with murder and robbery. Again they escaped and resumed their raiding which struck terror into the hearts of settlers in New Mexico, Arizona and Old Mexico (Chihuahua). More troops came into the area and almost continuous fighting followed, and the Indians usually came out ahead as they would fight and run. More troops came in and Victorio crossed the line into Mexico where he continued his bloody work. In October, 1880, Mexican troops found Victorio's party consisting of 100 warriors and 400 women and children. The Indians were surrounded and a fight which lasted all night followed. In

the morning the Indians, although their ammunition was exhausted, refused to surrender until Victorio, who had been wounded several times, fell dead. This ended Victorio, but did not end the war. Under Nana, they continued the fighting being reinforced by tribesmen from Mescalero and other places and the fighting continued under different chiefs until they were finally whipped and surrendered in 1886.

FOLLOW a finger—to a diamond mine.

Request:—I should like any information you can give me relative to diamonds in South America.

—KENNETH B. EMERY,
Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Diamonds are found in vast quantities in the Diamantino district of Brazil. These are very fine quality stones, bringing carat for carat better prices than for African stones. The mining of them in Brazil is a government monopoly, the ground being leased to operators and a royalty paid on each stone. They also have been discovered in other parts of Brazil where considerable fields have been developed. Besides the gem diamonds, black diamonds of great size are to be found there, and these bring quite a price also.

An absolutely new diamond field might possibly be discovered in Brazil. Once when I was tramping from Rio to Sao Paulo a native told me he knew of a river about sixty-four miles from where we were standing (the village of Sao Jose dos Santos) which was rich with gem diamonds. He took me to his house and showed me a quart of uncut stones as proof of his yarn. Of course he had no right to them but he had them anyhow and he gave me several which I later had cut in Argentine. I have often thought of going back there and going in the direction he indicated by pointing, to see if I could locate that river. Standing on the track of the railroad and facing toward Sao Paulo the direction would be between forty-five and ninety degrees off to the right in the Sao Paulo quadrant. I'll know where that guy pointed if and when I get back to start that trip. I just know he was telling the truth somehow or other.

Diamonds have not yet been discovered in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia or Chile. British Guiana has a field where small good diamonds are mined. They do, no doubt, exist in other parts of South America.

Colombia leads South America in emerald production, platinum and gold. That diamonds have not been found does not prove they do not exist for I saw typical diamond ground being dug from the bottom of the Culebra Cut when the canal was being dug. I do not believe that the main diamond lode of South America has been discovered yet.

THE only cure for foot-itch—extensive tramping.

Request:—I want to take a trip next fall to the American tropics either the West Indies, Central America or possibly Venezuela.

I hardly expect to be able to vagabond the trip down. I will probably have to take a passenger liner. But I would like to spend three or four months at least down there.

I want to learn the language in its varied forms, to study the animal and bird life and to build my collection of insects.

Now, living in hotels would run into a lot of money so I am appealing to you for information as I would like to be near the jungle. Would I camp out or live with natives or are there other white people with whom I could live and board reasonably.

—GEORGE W. HANELIUS, Quincy, Mass.

Reply by Mr. R. Spiers-Benjamin:—I would suggest that you consider the West Indies or possibly the Guianas, rather than Venezuela or Central America, due to immigration laws.

Santo Domingo, Haiti, or any one of the three Guianas seems to me, to offer the best possibilities for a collector of insects, and a student of languages. Living costs will not be much of an item. At Puerto Plata, one of the outlying towns of the Dominican Republic, you can live at the best hotel there—the Europa—for as little as thirty dollars a month including board. This town can be used as a base and camping trips can be made from there, should you so desire. Inasmuch as most all the towns are directly in the country, this will hardly be necessary. In the section of the Sabaneta River, in the North of the Dominican Republic there is reputedly large amounts of gold dust in the sands of the river, parts of which have never been fully explored. But don't let me put ideas in your head!

Transportation: There are many small steamship lines such as the Red. D., the Royal Dutch, the Bull Line, etc., which have limited accommodations on their freighters.

THE ASK ADVENTURE SERVICE is free, provided self-addressed envelope and FULL POSTAGE for reply are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries must enclose International Reply Coupons, which are exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union.

Send each question *direct* to the expert in charge of the section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **Do Not** send questions to this magazine. Be definite; explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question. The magazine does not assume any responsibility. **No Reply** will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing or for employment.

★(Enclose addressed envelope with International Reply Coupon.)

ASK ADVENTURE EXPERTS

SPORTS AND HOBBIES

- Archery**—EARL B. POWELL, care of *Adventure*.
Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, 250 Bronxville Rd., Bronxville, N. Y.
Camping—PAUL M. FINE, Jonesboro, Tenn.
Boxing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.
Canoeing: paddling, sailing, cruising, regattas—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 161 W. Harrison St., Chicago, Ill.
Coins and medals—HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., N. Y. C.
Dogs—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure*.
Fencing—CAPT. JEAN V. GROMBACH, 113 W. 57th St., N. Y. C.
First Aid—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.
Fishing: salt and fresh water; fly and bait casting; bait; camping outfits; fishing trips—JOHN B. THOMPSON, (Ozark Ripley), care of *Adventure*.
Football—JOHN B. FOSTER, American Sports Pub. Co., 45 Rose St., N. Y. C.
Globe-trotting and vagabonding—ROBERT SPIERS-BENJAMIN, 1177 East 15th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Health Building Activities, Hiking—DR. CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, care of *Adventure*.
Horses: care, breeding, training of horses in general; hunting; jumping; and polo; horses of old and new West—MAJOR THOMAS H. DAMERON, 1709 Berkley Ave., Pueblo, Calif.
Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.
Motor Camping—MAJOR CHAS. G. PERCIVAL, M.D., 152 W. 65th St., New York City.
Motorcycling—regulations, mechanics, racing—CHARLES M. DODGE, 108 Winthrop Rd., Brookline, Mass.
Mountain Climbing—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, Yosemite, Calif.
Old Songs—ROBERT FROTHINGHAM, 995 Pine St., San Francisco, Calif.
Old-Time Sailing—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Oriental Magic and Effects—JULIEN PROSKAUER, 143 Lafayette St., New York, N. Y.
Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: foreign and American—DONOGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. No. 3, Box 69, Salem, Oregon.
Shotguns: foreign and American makes; wing shooting—JOHN B. THOMPSON, care of *Adventure*.
★Skiing and Snowshoeing—W. H. PRICE, 3436 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.
Small Boating: skiffs, outboard, small launch, river and lake cruising—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.
Soccer—MR. BEDA VON BERCHEM, care of *Adventure*.
Stamps—DR. H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Avenue, Denver, Colo.
Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y. C.
Swords: spears, pole arms and armor—CAPT. R. E. GARDNER, 134 N. 4th St., Columbus, Ohio.
Tournament Fly and Bait Casting—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, Box 163, Jenkintown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINE, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—CHARLES B. CRANFORD, School of Education, New York University, Washington Square, New York, N. Y.

Yachting—A. R. KNAUER, 2722 E. 75th Pl., Chicago, Ill.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: American; north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Automobiles and Aircraft Engines: design, operation and maintenance—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Aviation: airplanes, airships, airways and landing fields, contests, aero clubs, insurance, laws, licenses, operating data, schools, foreign activities, publications, parachute gliders—MAJOR FALK HARMEL, 709 Longfellow St., Washington, D. C.

Big Game Hunting: guides and equipment—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Entomology: insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects—DR. S. W. FROST, Arendtsville, Pa.

Ethnology: (Eskimo)—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Forestry: in the United States; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry: tropical forests and products—WM. R. BARBOUR, Box 575, Rio Piedras, Porto Rico.

Fur Farming—FRED L. BOWDEN, 104 Fairview Ave., Binghamton, New York.

Herpetology: reptiles and amphibians—CLIFFORD H. POPE, care of *Adventure*.

Marine Architecture: ship modeling—CHAS. H. HALL, 446 Ocean Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mining: territory anywhere in North America. Mining law, prospecting outfitting; any mineral, metallic or nonmetallic—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Motor Vehicles: operation, legislative restrictions and traffic—EDMUND B. NEIL, care of *Adventure*.

Ornithology: birds; their habits and distribution—DAVIS QUINN, 3548 Tryon Ave., Bronx, N. Y.

Photography: outfitting, work in out-of-the-way places, general information—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, N. J.

Precious and semi-precious stones: cutting and polishing of gem materials; technical information—F. J. ESTERLIN, 901-902 Shreve Bldg., 210 Post Road, San Francisco, Calif.

Radio: telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets—DONALD McNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

Railroads: in the United States, Mexico and Canada—R. T. NEWMAN, 701 N. Main St., Paris, Ill.

Sawmilling—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care of *Adventure*.

Sunken Treasure: salvaging and diving—COMDR. EDWARD ELLSBERG, U. S. N. R., care of *Adventure*.

Taxidermy—SETH BULLOCK, care of Adventure.

MILITARY, NAVAL AND POLICE SUBJECTS

Army Matters: United States and Foreign—CAPT. GLEN R. TOWNSEND, 5511 Cabanna Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Federal Investigation Activities: Secret Service, etc.—FRANCIS H. BENT, 251 Third St, Fair Haven, N. J.

Navy Matters: United States and Foreign—LT. COMDR. VERNON C. BIXBY, U. S. N. (retired), P. O. Box 588, Orlando, Fla.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police—PATRICK LEE, 11 Franklin Pl., Great Neck, Long Is., N. Y.
Police, City and State—FRANCIS H. BENT, 251 Third St., Fair Haven, N. J.

U. S. Coast Guard—COMDR. VERNON C. BIXBY, U.S.N. (ret.), P. O. Box 588, Orlando, Florida.

U. S. Marine Corps—CAPT. F. W. HOPKINS, R. F. D. 1, Box 614, La Canada, Calif.

World War: strategy, tactics, leaders, armies, participants, historical and political background—BEDA VON BRECHEN, care of Adventure.

GEOGRAPHICAL SUBJECTS

The Sea, Part 1 British and American waters, ships, seamen, statistics, record, oceans, waterways, seas, islands. Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Cape Horn, Magellan Straits, Mediterranean Sea, Islands and Coasts.—COMDR. EDWARD ELLSBERG, U.S.N.R., care of Adventure. **★2 Antarctica**—F. LEONARD MARSLAND, care of The Agent General for Queensland, Queensland House, The Strand, London, W. C. 2, England.

Philippine Islands—BUCK CONNER, Quartzsite, Ariz., care Conner Field.

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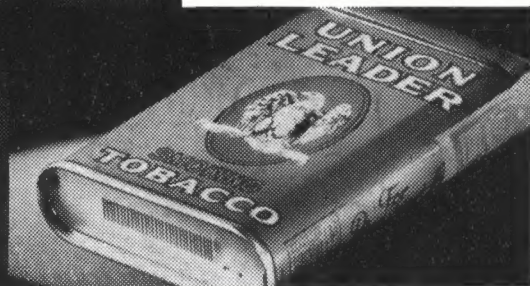
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